

# ON THE HEAD WATERS OF PEACE RIVER



PAUL LELAND HAWORTH












ON THE HEADWATERS  
OF PEACE RIVER



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LIMESTONE PEAK OVERLOOKING QUADACHA FORKS.



# ON THE HEADWATERS OF PEACE RIVER

A NARRATIVE OF A THOUSAND-MILE CANOE TRIP  
TO A LITTLE-KNOWN RANGE OF THE  
CANADIAN ROCKIES

BY

PAUL LELAND HAWORTH

AUTHOR OF "THE PATH OF GLORY,"

"GEORGE WASHINGTON: FARMER," "BY PACK-TRAIN TO MOUNT DALHOUSIE," "THE 'LUNGE  
OF FRENCH RIVER," "A MODERN VIKING," ETC.

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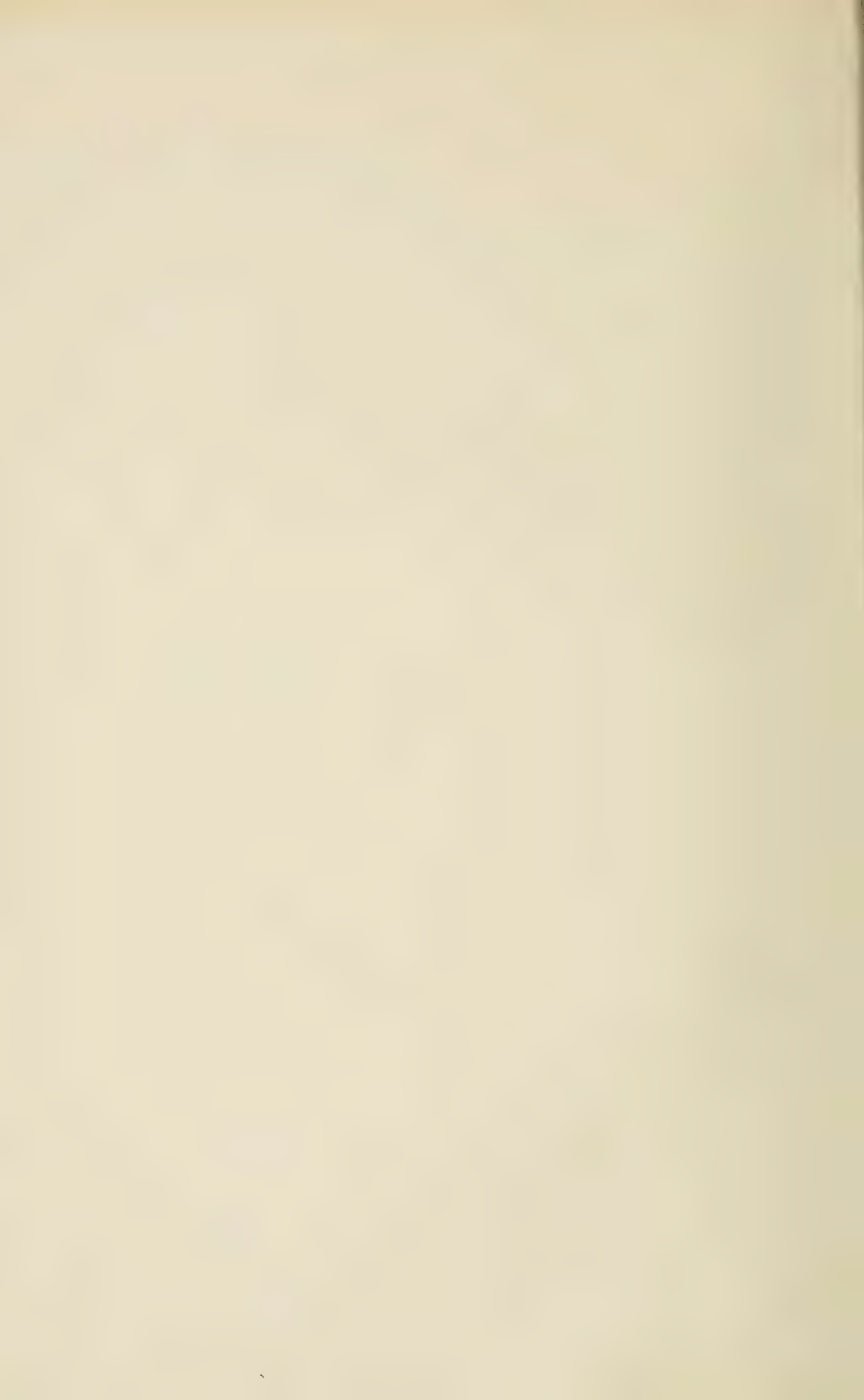
Published October, 1917





“I am glad to know that you are to have a fine, large trip in the Canadian Rockies, into a remote and little-known wilderness. I hope that you will be able to go beyond the farthest camping-ground and the last tin can.”

—DR. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY to the author,  
March 8, 1916.





## PREFACE

As a boy I fixed my heart on being a naturalist; I learned how to skin and stuff animals and birds; I read every book on natural history and wild life on which I could lay my hands. But at the university I entered the only life that was considered worthy of study was that of blind fish or of minute organisms whose wriggling forms could be seen only through a high-power microscope. I did some such zoology as this at the university biological station, but I specialized in history and gave up my original ambition.

For many years I was a student of books, a seeker after vain degrees conferred by pompous pedagogues in parti-colored gowns. Nay more, for a time I was a pedagogue myself in a great university beside the Hudson and lived in the land of the "Modern Cliff Dwellers," harassed by the roar of elevated trains and breathing the fetid air of the great metropolis of the western world. I delved into dry subjects in musty libraries, wrote books that I hoped would seem learned, and came to have the pale face and stooping shoulders of the professional pundit.

But the primeval instinct was not entirely extinguished. A month's fishing one golden autumn among the Thirty Thousand Islands that fringe the iron-bound coast of Lake Huron revived old and half-forgotten feel-

ings. My youthful love of horses and guns, of clear water and the open country, surged up once more hot and fierce; the thin veneer of supercivilization began to slough away. Thenceforward, except as a matter of business, I read little save the books of explorers, naturalists, and hunters, and many were the golden hours I spent with Gordon-Cumming, Stanley, doughty Sir Samuel Baker, Selous, Hornaday, White, and Roosevelt. With Peary I travelled every foot of his twenty years' weary journey to the pole; I went with Amundsen on both his Arctic quests; there was hardly a hunter or adventurer in any land or clime who was not my bosom friend and companion in wild experiences. Best of all I liked the penetrators of our own American northland. I crossed the Continent with Mackenzie and descended with him the great river that bears his name; with old Samuel Hearne I traversed snowy wastes to the Coppermine and shuddered with him at the massacre at Bloody Falls; with Whitney, the Tyrrells, Hanbury, Thompson Seton, and Warburton Pike I visited the Barren Grounds, was bitten by myriads of mosquitoes, saw the musk-ox and *la foule* of the caribou, shivered in icy tents, famished in times of famine, feasted when flesh was abundant, and breathed the scent from the myriad of flowers in summer.

Nor was I content with second-hand enjoyment alone. One fall I made a trip to the mountains about the headwaters of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Rivers, and, though the trip had to be a short one and in some respects was disappointing, it served to whet my appetite. I had hardly returned from it before I began to look for-

ward to and then to plan a trip that should be a real trip, and that is how I happen to be writing this book.

It is no longer an easy task to find in North America a primeval wilderness—even a little one—in which to indulge a fondness for wandering in remote regions “beyond the farthest camping-ground and the last tin can.” Labrador has been penetrated, the Barren Grounds have repeatedly been traversed, and Alaska has yielded up her geographical secrets to argonauts drawn thither by the lure of gold. For some years, however, my eyes were turned longingly toward a region that seemed to promise a persevering traveler an opportunity to set his foot where no other white man had been—at least no white man who had left a record of his journey.

Far up in northern British Columbia the mighty Peace River takes its rise, and after gathering to itself the waters of a vast area, breaks its way eastward through the barrier of the Rockies toward the Mackenzie and the Arctic Sea. The Peace is formed by the junction of two streams—the Parsnip flowing up from the south and the Finlay flowing down from the north. The main course of each of these streams is fairly well known, though the Finlay has rarely been ascended. Extended research enabled me to learn that in 1824 John Finlay, in the interest of the Northwest Fur Company, ascended the river that now bears his name to one of its sources in Thutade Lake; his journal of the trip was long preserved at Cumberland House but has now been lost. However, about a quarter of a century ago Mr. J. B. Tyrrell took notes from it, and through his courtesy I



am able to publish them in an appendix. In 1873 Captain W. F. Butler ascended the Peace and went up the Finlay about fifteen miles to a western tributary, the Omineca; fought his way up this stream some distance; and later published a short account of the region in his book entitled *The Wild Northland*. In the sixties and at intervals thereafter a few prospectors panned some of the lower Finlay bars for gold. For many years there has been a tiny Hudson's Bay trading-post about sixty miles up-stream, and to this post the Indians of the region resort to sell their furs. In 1893 the Canadian Geographical Survey sent out a party, headed by R. G. McConnell, which ascended the Finlay to the Fishing Lakes above the Long Canyon, and McConnell drew a map of the river and wrote a description of the region from a geological point of view. A few years later would-be Klondikers attempted to use the river as a link on their way to the Yukon country and experienced many hardships from cold and hunger and narrowly escaped a conflict with the Indians.

In short, though Finlay River had never been "written up" in a popular way, its main course was well enough known, and I had no great difficulty in ascertaining a number of facts about it. I learned, for example, that most of the western tributaries had all been more or less explored by prospectors, for it was from these western streams that the precious gold-dust came. But to the eastward of the Finlay is a great stretch of the Rocky Mountains—the stretch lying south of the Liard River and north of Laurier Pass—that had never

been explored; and there existed rumors, started by trappers who had sought pelts along the border-land, that hidden away in the ranges there were "peaks taller than Mount Robson."

The latest attempt to enter this region had been made in 1912 by Mr. Frederick K. Vreeland in the interests of the United States Biological Survey. Mr. Vreeland and his party went into the country with pack-horses from Hudson's Hope on Peace River, penetrated slightly north of Laurier Pass, killed specimens of caribou and mountain-sheep, and were turned back by the weather, rough country, and down timber. Mr. Vreeland presented some of the results of this journey in an address before the American Geographical Society.

I believed that it would be interesting to attempt to enter the unexplored country. It seemed safe to assume that one would be likely to find game there; the trip thither and back was certain to be worth while; and merely to renew my acquaintance with the Canadian Rockies would be a pleasure beyond price.

The proposed trip appeared the more feasible because the recent completion of two railroads had rendered the region I wished to visit more accessible. In a few months I would be able—if all went well—to make a journey that only recently would have occupied the greater part of a year. From Edmonton, my outfitting-place, I must travel far to the west, then far to the north, then far to the east, and then far to the south back to the starting-point. Thanks to the new Grand Trunk Pacific, I could do the four hundred miles of the westward swing in less

than a day and a night, while the just-finished railroad to Peace River Crossing would enable me to cover in the same manner more than three hundred miles of the return.

Ultimately I decided to make the venture. I had no hope or expectation of exhaustively exploring the region, or of making any great addition to the fund of geographical knowledge. Experiences were what I was seeking. If I could make the long trip successfully, have a bit of hunting and fishing, and determine somewhat generally the character of the unexplored mountain region, I should feel satisfied.

I set out for the remote Northwest alone.

PAUL LELAND HAWORTH.

EASTOVER, WEST NEWTON, INDIANA,  
March, 1917.



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# ON THE HEADWATERS OF PEACE RIVER

## CHAPTER I

### THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

I REACHED Winnipeg early one July morning after the most unpleasant railway journey it had ever been my misfortune to experience. Practically the whole of the United States was sweltering under a hot wave of almost unprecedented severity, and it was not until my train neared the Canadian border that a cool breeze from the north began to afford relief. A night spent in a St. Paul hotel had been the hottest I ever suffered, but my stay in that city was somewhat recompensed by a long conversation with a charming old gentleman who had settled there in the '50's, when St. Paul was a village and Minneapolis unthought of, and who had many interesting anecdotes of the early days, and of his friend "Jim" Hill. I also recall, with an enthusiasm that even the memory of the heat is unable to dim, a gorgeous blood-red sunset on Lake Pepin seen from the car window.

Half a century ago the westward trip from Winnipeg, then Fort Garry, across the Great Plains was one of unique interest, and was likely to be attended with numerous adventures. There were picturesque half-

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breeds, creaking Red River carts, shaggy buffaloes, pronghorned antelopes, wild Crees and Blackfeet; and the journey occupied months. To-day the trip takes a day and a night, and after it has been made once it is likely to prove a bit monotonous. When settled, the Canadian plains become as tame and unexciting as the Kansas prairies, and wheat and oat fields now ripple where Poundmaker and other befeathered chieftains once built their corrals and slaughtered the buffaloes by thousands. It is progress, civilization, perhaps, but the change half saddens me, for I am not one of those who want to see the whole world transformed into market-gardens, or staked off into town lots. Where, pray tell me, will our descendants two or three generations removed go to find their wilderness?

The monotony of the trip across the plains in the present instance was greatly relieved by evidences that the country was at war. Winnipeg was full of soldiers from Camp Hughes, farther west; there were model trenches dug in one of the public squares; dead walls were crowded with exhortations to French Canadians, Highlanders, Scandinavians, Americans, and even Icelanders to "do their bit" for "King and Country"; while every train bore scores of men in uniform. On the sleeping-car that carried me westward I made the acquaintance in the smoking-compartment of one such, whom I shall call "Scotty." Scotty was a discharged veteran of the immortal "Princess Pats," and previously had seen service among the kopjes against the Boers. His short, stubby body bore the scars of four wounds

received in fighting the Germans, and he had lost two fingers of one hand, and half of a foot. He told some exciting stories of his military experiences, but, being somewhat "lit up," seemed prouder of his exploits in beating the prohibition laws of Manitoba than of his deeds on the battle-field. He also explained with glee how he was hoodwinking the doctors in order to obtain extra big allowances from the government, and shamelessly declared that he meant to get all he "could out of it." He made it his boast that he was never able to keep money, and told with gusto of how he had once had nine hundred dollars in a bank, had drawn it out, and had run through it in three days. A Winnipeg business man who listened to his story ventured to urge, in a fatherly way, that he ought to save his money and settle down, but Scotty declared with great determination that he meant to die without a cent.

Alas for a hero!

Altogether different in character was another survivor of the same regiment, an employee in the Hudson's Bay Company's store at Edmonton. He was a tall, erect man of perhaps thirty-five, quiet and little inclined to talk of the war. By questioning him I ascertained that he had lost the sight of one eye in battle, and his description of the hell of fire that virtually destroyed his regiment did not differ materially from Scotty's.

"Did you feel that you gave as good as you received?" I asked him.

"There were several times when we had good shooting," he said, his face lighting up reminiscently.



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"Twice they came on in mass formation, and we simply piled them up in heaps. We considered these opportunities a recompense for what we suffered."

The story of the Princess Pats is one of the most heroic in the annals of war, and will forever be treasured in Canadian history. Enlisted largely from among men with previous military experience in actual warfare, it was early at the front, and bore without flinching punishment that few organizations have ever endured. I talked with a returned veterinary surgeon who told me that once he saw the regiment when it could put only 78 men in line, and there are stories to the effect that at times it was even weaker.

The Grand Trunk Pacific, on which I was travelling, runs diagonally from Winnipeg to Edmonton through comparatively new country, and one saw from the car-windows occasional evidences of wild life. Now and then coveys of prairie-chickens rose from beside the track, while the presence of many hawks indicated that the chickens did not always enjoy peace and safety even during the closed season. The number of hawks one sees upon these plains is, indeed, discouragingly large from the point of view of the preservation of small game, and serves to explain why, now and then, in the fall especially, some of the States in the Mississippi Valley are full of hawks, both big and little. Fortunately, hawks are not an unmixed evil, as they destroy great numbers of prairie-dogs, mice, and other vermin.

Many of the small lakes bore coveys of ducks, some of them not yet able to fly, while now and again the



Reproduced from a photograph by C. L. Mathers.

"WHERE POUNDMAKER AND OTHER BEFEATHERED CHIEFTAINS ONCE BUILT THEIR CORRALS, AND SLAUGHTERED THE BUFFALOES  
BY THOUSANDS."





traveller beheld a musquash, that is, a muskrat, swimming through the water, usually with a bunch of grass or straw in his mouth. Some of the muskrat houses on these lakes are as large as many beaver lodges I have seen. A few of the lakes are so heavily impregnated with alkali that they are avoided not only by animals, but also by the ducks and other water-fowl.

If time had permitted I should have liked to stop for a day or two at Wainwright to visit the great Canadian wild-animal park. We saw the park from a distance, but could distinguish no animals. The park now contains the largest herd of American buffaloes in the world, about two thousand, to say nothing of moose, antelope, and other animals. The buffaloes represent, in the main at least, the celebrated Pablo herd, which the United States parsimoniously permitted to be sold to Canada and sent beyond our borders.

Our train finally reached Edmonton at ten o'clock in the evening, and, as this was to be my last chance at the "flesh-pots" for many weeks, I put up at a new palatial hotel erected by one of the railroad companies. When I sallied out next morning I found a different Edmonton from that with which I had become acquainted six years before. Then it was the "jumping-off place" for the North and West, and most clerks had some personal knowledge of what any one intending a trip into the bush needed; now it differed little from other towns, and the clerks were like all other clerks, and had little knowledge of canoes, tents, or guns—of anything but prices, which were high.

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As one beholds the miles and miles of paved streets and splendid buildings, it seems incredible that, even in my own lifetime, Edmonton was merely a fur post beneath whose palisaded walls wild Crees and Blackfeet waylaid and scalped each other.

In view of the fact that the trip by water would be more than a thousand miles long, that some of the streams were shallow, that many rapids must be run and frequent portages made, I had already decided that I must have a light, canvas-covered canoe about eighteen feet long, and capable of carrying two men and a considerable load. In correspondence earlier in the year I had been assured that the supply of canoes in Edmonton was unlimited; great, therefore, was my disgust when I learned that there was not in the whole city a canvas-covered canoe, of the usual type, more than sixteen feet long. I had about decided to take an ordinary basswood Peterborough when I heard of a company down on the Saskatchewan that had, according to the story, an overstock of canvas canoes. Much elated, I hurried down the long, steep hill to the river, to find that the craft in question were really Chestnut sponson canoes, seventeen feet long. Now it had never been my intention to take a sponson canoe on the trip, but the man in charge was insistent that I should look one of the boats over, and I did so. She was a stanch, beautiful little craft, weighing about ninety pounds, capable of carrying six or seven hundred pounds and two men, a bit too low in the sides for rough water, but safe and sure to float in case she ever should fill. She was not just what I wanted; I realized



that with all our stuff aboard she would ride pretty low, but I knew a way of keeping out the swells, and she seemed to come the nearest my requirements of anything available, so I took her.

Most of my provisions and other stuff I bought at the Hudson's Bay store, which in Edmonton is merely a big department store that does not differ greatly from similar stores in other cities. I picked up a few articles elsewhere, and had brought others from the States. As we were going on a trip where every ounce would count, and where everything used must be carried along, I had given the subject considerable care. The completed outfit, besides the canoe, included the following articles:

One Winchester .401 automatic rifle, equipped with Lyman sights. I had owned this gun for six years, and was familiar with its advantages and weaknesses. Like all rifles, it is more suitable for some kinds of work than for others, but, on the whole, it is a good weapon in the hands of one who understands it. For small game I had brought with me an old Remington .32 rim-fire rifle and a hundred long cartridges. I had had this rifle many years, and had killed a great variety of game with it. To my mind a weapon of this sort is better for small game than a .22, as it does not tear too much of a hole, will shoot farther, and can be used, at a pinch, on large game.

One 3A Graflex camera. This also was an old companion, and with it I had done some fair work, not because I am a good photographer, but because I had an excellent machine. My mistake on this trip was to underestimate its capacities. Such a camera is, of



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course, rather heavy for mountain work, its weight being about four and a half pounds. The leather case that the manufacturers furnish for it leaves much to be desired as a means of protection against either shocks or water, and at home I had made a box out of some clear poplar boards, and had covered it with canvas and fitted it with carrying straps. This box proved a great success, and served to lift a heavy load of anxiety off my mind, for the camera was really the most essential article of the trip. The box also furnished a handy receptacle for numerous other small articles. Most of the films were in water-tight tins.

One  $7\frac{1}{2}$  x  $7\frac{1}{2}$  forester tent of balloon-silk, weight about four and a half pounds. These tents are open in front, but I took along a spare piece of canvas, which was useful as a tarpaulin and was available to keep out rain when the wind was uncertain and shifting. The tent was a bit small, but there was room for two in it and also for a couple of pack-sacks. For protection against mosquitoes I took along plenty of cheese-cloth. Ordinary mosquito-netting is unsatisfactory, as the mesh is made too large.

A cooking outfit that would "nest" and a Hudson's Bay axe. I left the buying of a small axe until I got to Prince George, and then had to be content with a hatchet, as there were no good small axes in stock.

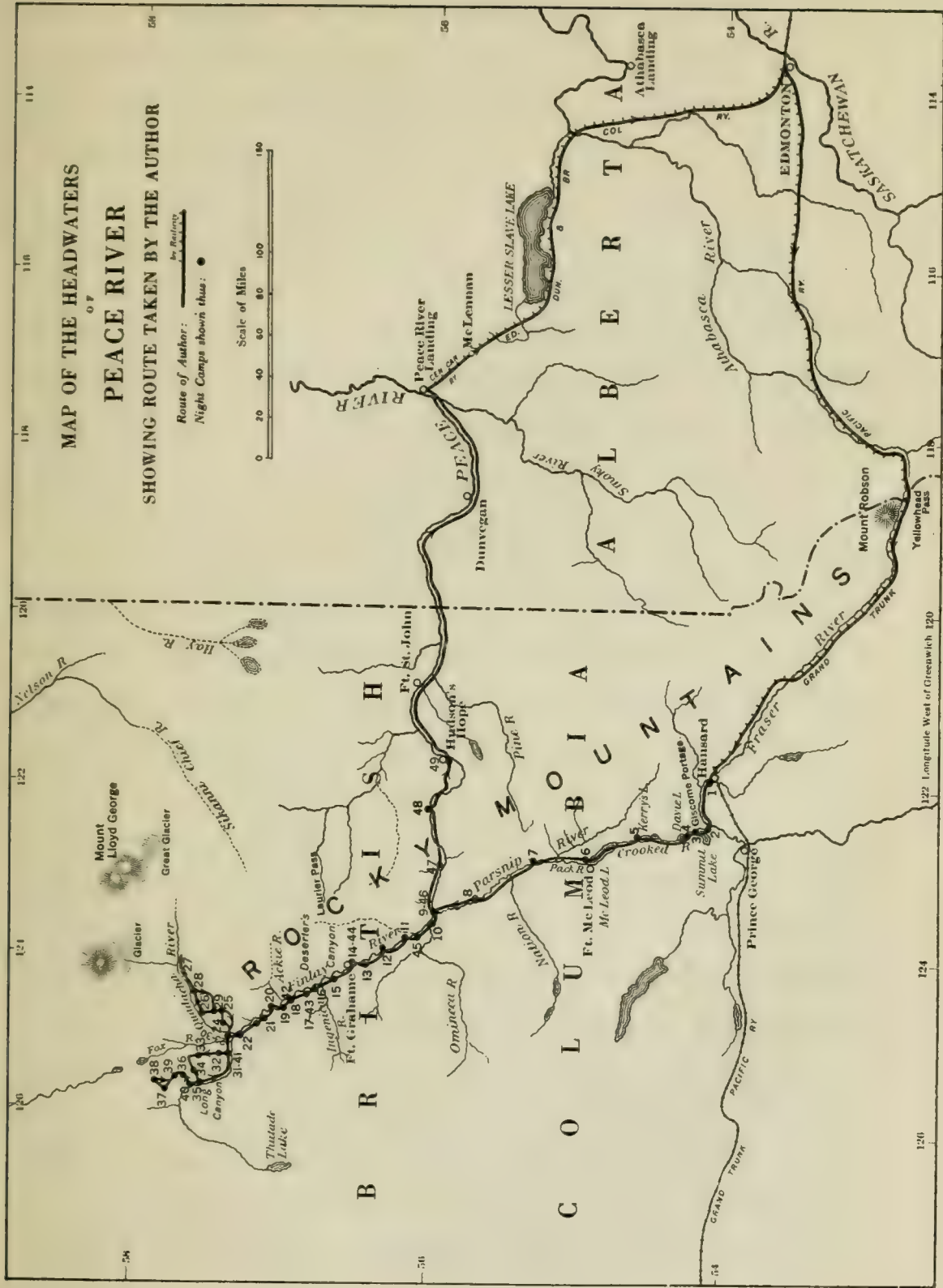
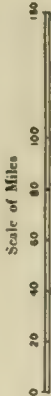
A Bristol fishing-rod, with plenty of spoons, flies, and other tackle. This rod had seen much active service, in particular against the hardy bass and muskallonge of Georgian Bay and French River.

MAP OF THE HEADWATERS

PEACE RIVER

SHOWING ROUTE TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

Route of Author: —————  
Nights Camps shown thus: •







In the way of bedding I took a canvas ground-cloth, a light blanket, a heavy blanket, and plenty of big blanket pins for use in improvising a sleeping-bag. In the way of clothing I had an alleged water-proof suit of a much-advertised brand. The coat proved helpful in wet weather, though far from being capable of turning a big rain, but the trousers were almost worthless, as they rustle too much to hunt in, will not keep out the water from wet bush, and wear in holes in a few days of real work. However, I had along another pair of ordinary khaki to hunt in. I also had plenty of woollen underclothing, two heavy woollen shirts, and a sweater. For footwear I had a pair of ordinary street shoes and a pair of excellent shoe-packs. I intended to lay in at Fort Grahame a supply of moccasins for hunting purposes.

The food supply was ample and varied. As most of the trip would be by canoe, I took along more heavy canned stuff, particularly canned fruit and tomatoes, than I would otherwise have done. At the other end of the scale, as regards weight, I had brought from the States a considerable quantity of dehydrated stuff for use particularly in the mountains. The most worthless thing I took was an immense can of ground mustard, which I bought by weight, "sight unseen," without realizing how much I was getting. At the end of the trip the can was still intact, and I joyfully gave it to a friend. From the States I had brought a number of water-proof bags and several empty friction-top tins of varying sizes, and they proved invaluable for keeping the food dry and in good condition.

The real starting-point was the little station of Hansard, on the upper Fraser beyond the Rockies, 1,235 miles northwest of Winnipeg, 442 miles west of Edmonton, and 46 miles east of Prince George (formerly Fort George). The canoe and the rest of the stuff, except my personal baggage and a few other articles that I took with me, were to follow on the next Friday's train. As for myself, I donned my hunting-clothes, left my others at the hotel, and boarded the Wednesday night train for Prince George, intending to engage a man for the trip at that place and return to Hansard on Saturday in time to receive my stuff when it was unloaded. This arrangement was rendered necessary by reason of the fact that Hansard was a mere stop in an unsettled country, and had no agent.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PORTAL

WHEN I awoke and looked out of the car-window next morning, I found that we had passed out of the settled prairie and were running through a wild and sombre region of fen and muskeg, overgrown with columnar spruce and lodge-pole pine. In places rushing fires had swept over the land, leaving blasted trunks standing amid the blackened stumps and prostrate bodies of comrades half consumed. The sun had just begun dimly to lighten the world, and to the far northwestward appeared a long row of what at first I was certain were jagged mountains, but which ultimately proved to be merely masses of low clouds.

We were passing through a region that had old associations for me, and I kept a keen outlook for familiar scenes. Six years before I had ridden to the town of Wolf Creek on the first construction-train that had ever run through to Edson, and later I had started from Edson with a pack-train for a trip to the Brazeau country and Mount Dalhousie. Then Wolf Creek had for some months been the end-of-steel, and was a place of considerable importance. In the preceding winter hundreds of town lots had been sold to hopeful Eastern investors, and the place had been a Mecca for mosquitoes, mules, flies, ox-teams, navvies, and gamblers. But Ed-



son, eight miles farther west, had become track's-end; Wolf Creek's boom was "busted," and Wolf Creek's population was moving on.

"What is the price of real estate in this burg?" I asked a storekeeper who was about to join the emigration.

"I gave three hundred and fifty dollars for this lot," he said with a grin. "Seeing it's you, you may have it for fifty dollars."

"Seeing it's I, I suppose one sawbuck would buy it," I returned.

And he grinned again.

When Wolf Creek presently came in sight I found my expectations realized. The first beams of the morning sun shining through the waste of spruce showed that of all the huts, shacks, and Waldorf Astorias hardly one log remained upon another; the only building that continued intact was a tiny white church set well back from the road, and half hidden by a copse of young jack-pine. Even it had neither worshippers nor mourners, for Wolf Creek was now neither a habitation nor even a name. The only living thing visible was a crow perched like an image carved in jet upon the blackened top of a blasted pine.

The fate of Wolf Creek is typical of scores of other little towns upon new railroads. If one were to search among the ruins of such towns, he would find the neglected graves of those who fell in aiding the march of the iron horse to the Pacific. Many who perished thus were victims of the carelessness of others, for rarely, in this

age of the world, has a great undertaking been conducted with so little attention to health and sanitation as was the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Filth and garbage collected undisturbed; flies made their deadly rounds, and many of the camps were simply rotten with typhoid and other diseases. Women who braved the hardships suffered most of all. When the hard times came, following the completion of the road, men were wont to say: "Things are dull indeed. Why, we aren't even burying any more women!"

The region beyond Wolf Creek also called up memories, for it was there that on my previous trip I had first caught sight of the Canadian Rockies. With Jimmy Paul, a Cree half-breed, I was riding a cayuse from Wolf Creek to Edson, when from the top of a divide I beheld the tooth-like summits of a mighty range. Far off they were, fifty miles at least to the nearest, but very close they looked, towering up beyond the green sea of foothills. It was a clear afternoon, and one could see peaks southward beyond Banff and far northward up in the Smoky River country—four hundred miles of snow-capped mountains in a single mighty sweep.

When the train reached Edson I looked the place over with as much interest as I had Wolf Creek. When I had been there before, Edson was to be a great city. A square mile of muskeg—a peculiarly villainous kind of swamp—had been surveyed into lots and placed on the Eastern markets when I passed through westward; another square mile was being surveyed when I returned. Lots were sold in large numbers in Eastern



Canada, the United States, Europe, and even South America, and the price of some of the choicest was several thousand dollars. But the construction gangs passed on, and with them departed Edson's prosperity and all except a few hundred of its population.

A few miles beyond Edson we crossed the long trestle bridge over the McLeod at the "Big Eddy," the point where six years before our pack-train had turned off the right of way toward the Brazeau country. Presently we were among the foot-hills, and were running along but far above the turbid Athabasca, which even here is a considerable river. Soon we entered the confines of Jasper Park and passed through the gateway guarded by Boule Roche Mountain and Roche à Perdrix, with the mighty cliff of Roche Miette not far beyond. In places the Athabasca broadens into Alpine lakes, Brulé Lake and Jasper Lake. Near Brulé Lake bubbles the Miette Hot Springs, of which much will be heard in years to come. I watched the changing scene with rapt interest. It seemed as if this were my kingdom, and that after long years of absence I was once more entering in!

The day was stormy, and now and then clouds drove down upon the peaks, veiling them from view. Again the clouds were swept aside, and I was able to see enough to convince me that Jasper Park and Mount Robson Park, the latter just across the provincial boundary-line in British Columbia, will ultimately be among the favorite playgrounds of the Continent. These parks contain hot springs, cascades, swift rivers, beautiful lakes, tangled forests, great glaciers, and mighty snow-capped peaks,



while in their fastnesses roam black and grizzly bears, caribou, moose, mountain-sheep, and mountain-goats, and their tumbling streams abound with trout.

The station of Jasper, which in time will doubtless be surrounded by many huge hotels, lies in an amphitheatre surrounded by tall peaks, among them Mount Geikie, Pyramid Mountain, and Mount Edith Cavell, the last named after the heroic English nurse. The site of Henry House, a famous fur post of the long ago, lies not far back, and the Athabasca flows just at hand.

On leaving the Athabasca, which rises in a mighty wilderness of peaks to southward, we thundered westward up the tumbling Miette toward Yellowhead Pass. Years before, from a high divide, I had beheld this pass, which looked as if some mighty Titan had hewed it out of the barrier wall with a giant axe, but never before had I been within the portal. The ascent to the pass is so imperceptible that one is not conscious, unless told, that he has actually reached the summit. In one spot the headwaters of two streams mingle; one stream empties into Athabaskan and Arctic waters, while the other flows into the Fraser, and thus its water reaches the Pacific.

The Grand Trunk makes a great point of the fact that it crosses the mountains at a low elevation, and that the grade is never excessively steep. The promoters of the road expected to carry to and from the terminal at Prince Rupert a large share of the products of and supplies needed by the Prairie Provinces. It was believed, for example, that it would be cheaper to carry wheat

westward from Alberta and Saskatchewan, and thence send it by water through the Panama Canal, than to ship it to the Great Lakes and the Eastern seaboard. Inasmuch as the cost of carrying a bushel of wheat from Edmonton even to Lake Superior is more than twenty cents, it is clear that here was a problem the solution of which would bring the solver big dividends. It was this pressing transportation problem that caused the Canadian Government to extend so much aid to the Grand Trunk Pacific, and to the Canadian Northern, and also to engage in the construction of a railway to Hudson's Bay.

About the time that the Grand Trunk Pacific was ready to carry freight to the west coast the Great War burst upon the world. The British blockade and the German submarines soon produced such a shortage of merchant shipping that the scheme of cheap carriage of freight from Prince Rupert by way of the Pacific and Panama fell through—at least for a time. In consequence the Grand Trunk Pacific west of Edmonton found itself the possessor of a magnificent road-bed, but comparatively little traffic. The road runs through an immense territory that as yet contains only a few thousand inhabitants, who produce little and import little. When peace comes, when the shipping of the world has once more been restored and rates have fallen to normal, the original hope may be realized. In course of time, also, the country along the line will become more thickly populated, and this will make business. There is much good fir, spruce, and cedar timber in the Fraser valley, and





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A GLIMPSE OF MT. EDITH CAVELL.





this will be in demand on the prairies. This business alone will make a vast amount of freight. The region the road opens up is an empire in itself, with limitless natural resources.

I am confident that even the most blasé traveller could not avoid becoming enthusiastic over the views within and beyond the pass. Here alone was sufficient magnificent scenery for half a dozen trips, but to me it could only be a sort of prelude on which I could bestow a few hasty glances. Great snow-capped peaks tower up on every hand, while beside and beneath the road the Fraser River, quickly become a considerable stream, goes tumbling down a rocky chute so steep that one is inevitably reminded of a flight of stairs.

The immensity of the mighty mountain mass called British Columbia is not generally understood. Within it twenty Switzerlands could be set down, and there would still be room for England, Scotland, and one or two other European countries.

The supreme spectacle is, of course, Mount Robson. This mighty rock mass, 13,068 feet high and said to be the tallest in the Canadian Rockies, towers up not far from the railway, and passenger-trains stop at a favorable point in order to enable passengers to obtain a view of the monster. When we stopped, the mountain, for the most part, was veiled by misty clouds, but here and there one could catch glimpses of portions of the massive, serrated peak. Just after the train moved onward the clouds parted for a moment and I was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of what was evidently almost

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the very top. I am not sure but that the spectacle was more impressive so, for the clouds gave an air of mystery, of untold possibilities.

To westward for two hundred miles the Fraser River, through whose valley the railway runs, flows between two mighty mountain walls, and there are scores and scores of peaks that go far above timber-line and even above the snow-line. The celebrated English novelist, Sir Rider Haggard, had passed through the country only a few weeks before, and one of these peaks had been named in his honor. As one travels farther west the peaks gradually become lower and, of course, are less impressive.

I enjoyed the scenery along the route, though I must admit that I did not experience the fierce pleasure that I did later. There is as much difference between viewing mountains from a car-window or the top of a coach and travelling among them on foot or with a pack-train as there is between seeing a beautiful woman on the other side of the street and being married to her.

The Fraser becomes navigable for canoes a little above Tête Jaune Cache, but between this place and Prince George there are numerous rapids and canyons, in particular the Grand Canyon. During construction days an immense amount of freight was sent down the river in scows, fourteen hundred of these unwieldy craft being built for that purpose. Many were the disastrous wrecks. The river is lined with the battered timbers of scows that came to grief. The number of men who lost their lives on the river in this period will never be known,





Reproduced by courtesy of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

SCOW RUNNING THE GRAND CANYON OF THE FRASER.



but it was large, and many were the hairbreadth escapes. Old timers tell with particular gusto of a scow loaded with *filles de joie* that hung up for hours on a dangerous point; the leader of the party henceforth was known in that country as "the Sandbar Queen." Those were days of easy money and free spending, which are fondly recalled by the now purse-straitened denizens of the country.

Late in the afternoon, after many hours of running down the Fraser valley between aisles of cedar, spruce, and fir, we reached Prince George. This town stands at the junction of the Fraser and the Nechaco, at a point where the valley of the Fraser, emerging from the mountains, broadens out into a plain, while the Fraser itself turns to the south. Alongside stand Fort George and South Fort George. Fort George was an old Hudson's Bay trading-post, established originally by Simon Fraser in 1807. Near by was the village of the Indians, but the Indian claim to the land thereabouts was bought by the government, and the Indians were transferred to a location farther east. South Fort George and Prince George were born of the exigencies of real-estate speculation. While construction lasted all three enjoyed great prosperity. It required twelve bartenders working in shifts to supply the thirsty navvies who swarmed into "Johnson's Hotel" in South Fort George, and the receipts over the bar on a single day were as high, it is said, as seven thousand dollars. But the railway was finished, and the workers scattered to the four winds. Now everything, to use the euphemisti-



cal term employed by those who remained, was "quiet," which meant that business was dead and work scarce. However, the place has a big future.

My most immediate task on reaching Prince George was to engage a man to help me on the trip to the North. The first requisite in such a man was, of course, that he should "know water," that is, should be a good canoe-man. I hoped to find one who was also familiar with at least a part of the route that must be travelled, though this was not absolutely essential. Prince George has become one of the main outfitting points for the trappers and prospectors who operate on Peace River headwaters, and I found that there were several of these in town whose services could be obtained. News that a stranger from the outside was wanting such a man spread rapidly through the little burg, and within a few hours I had met a number of good fellows who would have been glad to go with me and whom I should have been glad to take along. But my plans contemplated taking only one other person, at least as far as Finlay Forks, and he was soon engaged.

His name was Joe Lavoie, and he was a native of Quebec, though most of his boyhood had been spent in Fall River, Massachusetts. About the time he attained manhood he had joined an older brother in the lumber-camps of Washington; subsequently the two had drifted over the international boundary-line into British Columbia. For about fifteen years Joe had engaged in prospecting, trapping, and other border pursuits. Prior to the building of the railroad he had been provincial fire-

warden of the region between Quesnel and Tête Jaune Cache, and had made his long rounds alone in a canoe on the wild waters of the upper Fraser. Those who knew him declared that no better canoeman could be found. He had spent the previous winter trapping in the country across Peace River from Mount Selwyn, and he told me that he had been as far up Finlay River as Fort Grahame. I presume that he did not mean the last statement literally, as it subsequently developed that he had only been about half-way thither. As he owned a pre-emption and a graphophone at Finlay Forks and possessed a roving disposition, he was quite willing to return to that region, and we quickly came to terms.

Next morning, for the sum of one hundred dollars, I secured a hunting license from the local provincial authorities, and, having performed the two tasks that had brought me to Prince George, I would have been ready early the next day, Friday, to return to Hansard, the real starting-point of the "expedition," but there was no train till Saturday morning, so we had perforce to wait till then.

However, the hotel at which I was staying was a fairly comfortable one and there were many interesting characters to talk to. Among those I met first was a certain Witt, who the preceding winter had trapped far up the Finlay and who now, bringing his Siwash dog, had come out to sell his fur and buy his outfit for the next winter. Witt was a native of Germany, and he told me that for years he had lived in the dirt and squalor of New York's lower East Side. It certainly is a far



cry from the sights, sounds, and smells of that congested district to the silent mountains, lonely valleys, and boundless forests of British Columbia. From him I obtained considerable information concerning the Finlay country and could have got more, but Lavoie assured me that Witt had really never been in the country to which we were going, and that he was not to be trusted. Subsequently I found that what Witt had told me was undoubtedly based on first-hand knowledge. I also learned that he and Lavoie had had trouble.

While I was in Hood's store making a few last additions to our outfit, I happened to hear a man say that one of the Norboe brothers was in town. The name stirred old memories, and I inquired:

"Is one of the Norboe brothers named Mack?"

No one could answer, but a bit later I was passing a feed store when I saw inside a slender man of perhaps sixty whose face—or rather picture—I was sure I had seen before. I stepped within and said to him:

"Does your name happen to be Norboe?"

He turned to me in mild surprise and said: "Yes, it is."

"Did you ever go out with a man named Hornaday and a man named Phillips and help photograph some mountain-goats?"

"I surely did," he answered, his eyes lighting up.

In a word, I had happened upon Mack Norboe, who some years before had helped John Phillips to secure by all odds the most remarkable mountain-goat pictures ever taken. These pictures were afterward published



in Hornaday's *Camp-Fires in the Canadian Rockies*, a book that I have enjoyed as much as any hunting-book ever printed.

He told me that he and his brother had left the Elk River country in Kootenay, where they guided Phillips and Hornaday, and were now located at Penny in the Fraser country, a hundred miles or so east of Prince George. They are still guiding hunters who have "lost bears," and Mr. Mack Norboe told me that they had found a splendid country, high and open, with little lakes, a country into which horses can go and where there are plenty of moose and bears. He also told me that Charlie Smith, whom every reader of Hornaday's book will remember, now has rheumatism so badly that he has been compelled to give up life in the open, and that, through the influence of Phillips, he is engaged in boy-scout work in Pittsburgh. "Grizzly Smith" he is called by the boys, and great is the success of his stories of adventure told round the camp-fires of the scouts.

The Norboes are types of the kind of guides who see to it that their patrons have such a good time that the patrons ever afterward consider them as lifelong friends, and sometimes—it has happened to Mack two or three times—pay their expenses East so that they can show the guides a good time in the haunts of men. Beginning life in Texas, the Norboes gradually moved northward, working as cattlemen in the buffalo days and later as trappers, prospectors, and guides, until at last they find themselves on the upper Fraser.

Another exceedingly pleasant acquaintance I made

at the hotel was a gentleman named George McFarlane Anderson, a native of Scotland, a resident of Victoria, and now engaged in overseeing the construction of a bridge over the Fraser or Nechaco, I forget which. Mr. Anderson had long been stationed in India, and he showed me the most interesting collection of pictures of that country I have ever seen. He enjoys the distinction of having been the first man to introduce khaki from India into England, and he also has a novel theory to the effect that the Ophir of King Solomon was located in Malabar.

My man Lavoie, who had registered at the hotel, spent the last evening with some friends, celebrating his coming departure in their own way, and so successfully that I fear that if we had been starting that night we would have come to grief in the first rapid.

Next morning, having bidden my new friends good-by, I took the east-bound train, along with Lavoie, and we soon covered the forty miles or so back to Hansard. I had been led to suppose that the station at Hansard stood on a small creek that empties almost immediately into the Fraser, but I found that the creek is really about three-quarters of a mile from the station. The station itself is a small wooden building, and there was no agent, but a Roumanian section-boss and two of his men and the wife of one of them lived in a part of the building. The room intended for the use of passengers was literally crammed full of mosquitoes, and, leaving our baggage there, we were glad to hurry out into the open air.



As there was a wait of about eight hours before the west-bound train was due with our canoe and other outfit, we took my small rifle and walked eastward up the track a mile or so and crossed the bridge over the Fraser. The country a hundred feet from the track was a perfect wilderness, and there were impudent whiskey-jacks flitting about and uttering their harsh squawk, which sounds more like "*Wah k-e-e-e!*" than anything else I can put down on paper. Having a grudge against these thieving birds of old, I shot one of them for luck, and we also did some target practice at objects in the river. I was rather surprised to see a humming-bird, as I had never read of their going so far north. One naturally associates humming-birds with orchids and other tropical things; they seem exotic even in the Ohio valley, while in the Far North they are altogether out of place. And yet we were to see them far up the Finlay.

Mosquitoes were very bad, but I discovered that by letting down the back of my "cape cap"—intended to keep off rain—I could prevent them from cultivating a close acquaintance with my neck. Ripe red raspberries were numerous in patches along the track, and they served to eke out the simple lunch of bread and canned beef that we had brought along from Prince George. We expected to cook a royal supper out of the provisions coming from Edmonton.

After being cooped up so long on trains it was a great relief to me to be in the woods, and even Joe seemed to enjoy himself. I found him very lively and full of anecdotes, while now and then his bubbling spirits would



burst over in snatches of song about "Molly MacIntyre" or about a certain swain who

"loved Miss Molly Malone  
And longed for the time he could make her his own."

In the afternoon we carried our dunnage bags and other stuff down the track to the bank of the little creek. On leaving Edmonton I had been careful to bring along the silk tent and some cheese-cloth, besides most of my bedding, and, of course, Joe had his blankets. We pitched the tent, rigged up a cheese-cloth front to foil the mosquitoes, and otherwise made what preparations we could for the night. We expected to bring the rest of our stuff to the camp that night, and to set out down the Fraser early next morning for Giscome Portage.

Great, therefore, was our disappointment when the train pulled into the station to discover that only the canoe had come. Some *Dummkopf* in the express office at Edmonton had held up the rest of the outfit on the ground that there was no express agent at Hansard, and no one to receive the express and see that it was duly paid for. Advance payment had been impossible because when I left Edmonton the stuff had not yet reached the express office. I had foreseen some such complication and had not only explained the case to the expressmen but had got three men to promise faithfully that they would see to it that there were no tangles! We were in for a wait of two days at least. This was bound to be disagreeable, but the really serious side of the matter lay in the fact that we had a long and hard

journey before us, with a short season in which to do it, and the loss of even two days might prove a serious matter.

The only gleam of sunshine in the situation was that the canoe had come, and the conductor of the train was kind enough to carry her to the creek and put her off there. We launched her that very evening and took a short spin on the river. She paddled beautifully, while the sponsons made her exceptionally steady.

Luckily I had brought along some compressed tea in my dunnage bag and also some empty friction-top tins. We brewed tea in one of the tins and managed to make a passable supper with it and part of the bread and meat. As we had brought only two loaves of bread and a small can of meat, it looked as if we were thrown on our own resources very early in the game, for there were no stores or settlements for many miles.

"Maybe we can buy a little grub of the section-boss," said Joe as we were eating.

"We'll see first if we can't live off the country," I responded. "There are plenty of berries, and perhaps we can kill some game along the river."

"I think we can get a beaver, sure," Joe declared. "They are good meat, fat and greasy. I like them, and have eaten many."

I had made the express agent on the train promise to telegraph to Edmonton to forward the stuff by the next west-bound train, so there remained nothing that could be done except to wait and hope that the snarl would be untangled.



That night black clouds piled up in vast, black masses in the west; lightning flashed and thunder roared; every moment we expected the heavens to open and whirling sheets of rain to fall, but only a few scattered drops pattered down on the tent roof. Gradually the uproar of the elements died away, and we heard no sound save the sougling of the wind through the sombre woods and the monotonous hum of myriads of mosquitoes.

Next morning, after a meagre breakfast, we took the canoe and set off up the river. The Fraser, even this far up, is a big stream, two or three hundred yards wide, and so deep as to be utterly unfordable. It flows briskly between unbroken walls of tall spruce and fir, mingled with a few cottonwoods, and the banks are in most places overhung with a thick growth of alders and red and yellow willows. So thickly do these bushes grow that in many places it is almost impossible to make a landing, and the woods upon the banks are for the most part so densely covered with undergrowth, including the prickly devil's club (*Fatsia horrida*), that travel through them is exceedingly difficult. Ordinary hunting in such a region is manifestly impossible; practically all the game killed is either shot from a canoe or by watching some lake or slough. The water is full of silt, and fishing with a rod is useless, though it is said that good catches can be made with set lines. Salmon ascend the river in small numbers this far; in fact, a "run" was then on, though we were able to see few signs of it.

Repeatedly we saw fresh beaver cuttings and the tracks of the animals in the soft mud of the banks.



Twice also we saw where a big moose had ploughed through the willows and alders and down the bank and then had plunged into the river. There was a chance that we might see one of the beasts himself, and, though I would not, even in our existing lack of food, have shot a moose at that time, I would have welcomed a bear most joyously.

We had passed well beyond the bridge and were paddling along near the edge of one of the infrequent sandbars when I noticed an animal moving in a fringe of young willows. I called Joe's attention to it.

"It's a little bear," he whispered confidently.

But even as he spoke I recognized the slow, draggling gait and knew it was a porcupine. Joe quickly realized his mistake, but he was strongly in favor of my shooting the animal.

"I have eaten them often," he declared. "They are good meat."

Now, on another trip in the Canadian Rockies one of my packers had killed a porcupine, and I had watched the rest of the party devour the animal with seeming relish, but I could not bring myself to taste the greasy mess. However, I thought that at least Joe would find the animal savory, so I hastily sprang ashore, ran up the bar, and headed the porcupine off just as he was about to disappear in the thick forest. A bullet from my .32 soon ended his career.

"Assassination number one!" laughed Joe, gingerly holding up the animal by one leg.

It was not a feat in which to take pride, but anyway

the beast was fat, so we carried him out to the edge of the bar, and Joe proceeded to divest him of his skin, a rather ticklish task on account of the sharp quills, and also one that was rendered doubly disagreeable by clouds of inquisitive mosquitoes.

When the job was completed we put the carcass in the canoe and continued up the river. We must have gone up six or eight miles, but, though we paddled into several likely looking sloughs and passed among some islands that bore plenty of moose and bear tracks, we saw no other animals of any size, and our only further spoil consisted of some fine red raspberries that we found around an old construction-camp and proceeded to "can" on the spot.

On the way back we came upon a red squirrel swimming the river. He was already nine-tenths of the way across the flood, and, of course, my camera was not ready for service. We ran the canoe between him and the shore and even tried to turn him back with our paddles. The little fellow's eyes popped out like beads and he was evidently thoroughly frightened, but he seemed more afraid of swimming back than of us. He climbed right over our paddles and kept on with such persistence that he reached the bank before the camera was ready. I considered the episode much the most interesting happening of the day.

We had already seen two frogs swimming the river. The voyage across was nearly three hundred yards, and the water was infested by fish that undoubtedly would have been pleased to gulp down either frogs or squirrel.

One cannot but wonder what leads such creatures to launch out on such perilous journeys. Is it desire for a change of food? For new society? Or is it mere love of adventure and to see new country—the same sort of desire that was impelling me to my own long journey? Anyway, I felt a sort of fellow-feeling with the little creatures, foolish as I thought them!

We reached camp not long after noon, and Joe set out to prove the truth of his declaration that porcupine is good meat. We did not have any vessel in which the animal could be parboiled, but I had brought along my aluminum reflector baker, and Joe thought that he could roast “porky” very nicely in this. He was not mistaken either, and in due time the meal—tea, a little bread, and unlimited roast porcupine—was ready. I found that I was not very hungry, but I took a thigh and managed to get down several bites, though without notable enthusiasm. Joe ate one piece and part of another, but even he did not seem to be taking very great enjoyment in the feast.

“How do you like it?” I asked, striving to keep my face straight.

He hurled the piece he had been nibbling far from him. “It tastes like kerosene,” he admitted, grinning.

He went on to say that he thought there might have been something in the pan of the baker that had imparted the flavor, but I think he was mistaken. Porcupines eat a good deal of spruce bark and similar truck, and I suspect that this sort of diet had something to do with this animal’s peculiar flavor.



We gave up our effort to live off the country and ingloriously bought some bologna and bread of the section-boss. We left what remained of the porcupine reposing in the baker, and that night some animal sneaked into camp and carried off most of it. Next day the thief tried to repeat the offense, and Joe saw him. The thief was a small, bushy-tailed animal, with a white stripe running along his back, and he had a hole under the railway bridge a few yards from our tent. Joe rashly landed a stone in Mephitica's ribs, with the result that passage over the bridge became highly unpleasant thereafter. Luckily, our tent was to windward.

On a trip down the river that day we saw plenty of game signs, including fresh bear tracks within two hundred yards of camp, and we found plenty of raspberries, but had no adventures. These excursions helped, however, to pass the time and also served to put my muscles in training for the long pull ahead.

When train time drew near we walked down the track to the station. Personally I was hopeful yet also pessimistic as to our stuff's coming, for it seemed that expressmen who were "dumb" enough not to have forwarded it before, were hopeless.

A pre-emptioner who had a farm some miles down the river had brought two crates of strawberries to be taken by the train to Prince George, and we bought a couple of boxes for two bits. With him was one of his sons, a young fellow of perhaps twenty. The family were originally from East Tennessee—a far cry—and had been in the Fraser country for two or three years.

It was easy, the old man averred, to raise good crops once you had the land "chopped out," but he complained bitterly of lack of markets. The year before he had raised about thirty tons more potatoes than he could use, but had been forced to let them rot, as the freight rates to the world outside were prohibitive.

In the winter the father and his sons did a little trapping and were able to kill enough wild meat for their use. Both man and boy had shot moose, but the boy confessed: "Bears are too fast for me." The day before they had taken a long shot at a moose wallowing in the mouth of the North Fork, which joins the main Fraser below and across from their pre-emption.

The train from the East proved to be late, of course, but when it did arrive I was happy to discover that my forebodings were like those of the man who said that he had had a great deal of trouble in his life and most of it never happened. Not only was every article of our outfit aboard, but I was also able to buy an Edmonton paper containing the latest war news, and—better still—there were two good letters from home.

The conductor of this train also proved obliging. He warned us not to tell what he did for us, so I shall simply say that we did not have to carry our stuff to the creek!

We dug into the provisions with eagerness, you may be sure, and soon cooked a large and generous "feed." After supper we got everything in readiness for an early start next morning for Giscome Portage, thirty-five miles down the river. Then, content with the world, we sat

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round the camp-fire until drowsiness and the mosquitoes drove us inside our tent.

In the vernacular of the Northwest everything was "jake," which being translated into the President's English means "O. K."



## CHAPTER III

### FROM PACIFIC TO ARCTIC WATERS

TRAVELLING in a canoe has a number of advantages over travelling with a pack-train. For example, one does not have to catch his means of transport every morning—perhaps three miles from camp—nor worry about feed. It is far easier to load an outfit into a canoe than it is to rope it on the backs of half a dozen cayuses; nor is it usually necessary entirely to unload the canoe at night—and often at noon—as is the case with pack-horses. Consequently the problem of getting an early start is much less difficult with a canoe than with horses.

Even when we broke camp at Hansard, though we were loading the canoe for the first time, we managed to do it pretty expeditiously. When we had done so we found that our expectation that we had a big load for such a craft was fully realized. The load was all the bigger because Joe was taking a sixty or seventy pound case of Wagstaff's jam to his friend Peterson at Finlay Forks, while his own personal baggage and bedding were double in weight what I had ever before seen a guide carry. In fact, when we had everything stowed, including ourselves, we had no more than three inches of free-board, and to an observer a little distance away it would have seemed that we were running awash. In fact, the canoe rode so low that Joe declared:

“She looks like a U-boat about to dive.”

"We'll call her *The Submarine*," said I.

However, the sponsons made her as steady as a church, and I knew that even if she should fill she could not sink, while we had a plan for keeping out rough water when the need should come.

"All ready!" said Joe a little after seven o'clock.

For the fourth time we looked round our deserted camp site to make sure that we were leaving nothing except the mosquitoes, and then Joe stepped aboard. It seemed to me that it was a moment that ought to be chronicled in enduring form, so I fired two shots at the outfit with my Graflex. Then I took my place in the bow and our thousand-mile canoe trip began.

There is an exhilaration about a start on a trip of this kind, and we felt it to the full. Though dire prophecies had been uttered of disasters that would befall us, we felt confident of our ability to pull ourselves through every situation. Long vistas of magnificent possibilities lay before us: delectable mountains, hungry fish, obliging bears, toothsome caribou, festive goats!

To work our way down the little creek and out on the river required no more than twenty strokes of our paddles. Joe then steered our craft out into the current, we put our backs to the paddles, and soon we were shooting down the river at what, considering our load, was a rattling speed. According to the best accounts, it was thirty-five miles to Giscome Portage by river. We hoped to reach there by a little after noon and, if luck favored us, to have our goods hauled across so that we could camp on the shore of Summit Lake that night.





THE START FROM HANSARD.

"It seemed to me that it was a moment that ought to be chronicled in enduring form."





Both of us were in high spirits, and Joe broke again and again into his favorite songs.

A few miles of steady paddling brought us to the pre-emption of our friend from East Tennessee, and I landed for a minute to take a look at his outfit and to wave him farewell as he picked strawberries from among his luxuriant vines. We passed a number of small islands and the mouth of the slough that drains Hansard and Aleza Lakes, and we gazed with interest at the mouth of the North Fork, or, as it is sometimes called, the Salmon River. Some idea of the newness of the country can be obtained from the fact that on the latest maps of the Prince George district the course of this river, except for the last few miles, is represented by dotted lines. To the north of the upper Fraser and to the south of it also, for that matter, there are great stretches of country that have not yet been really explored.

I had expected to see ducks along the Fraser, but in our trips upon it we did not see a single one. In fact, the river was singularly devoid of bird life. We saw two or three gulls, and there were a few kingfishers and plenty of tiny tip-ups, that is, sandpipers, which ran up and down the edge of the water bowing politely to us and uttering their high-C little cries. These birds were to be almost constant companions on every stream we navigated.

Perhaps twenty miles below Hansard, as we were paddling along a hundred feet from the left bank, which was ten or a dozen feet high and thickly overgrown with trees and red willows, I heard a crackling among the

bushes. Thinking that the noise might be made by a bear, I caught up one of my rifles, which was lying in the bow, and as I did so saw a large moose standing on the bank. The animal's head and neck were hidden behind a spruce, and I was unable to see whether or not it was a bull or a cow. Had I been so minded I could by quick work have landed a bullet in its anatomy, but, of course, had no thought of doing so. I did, however, want its picture, but it almost immediately moved out of sight in the thick bush, and, though we paddled up and down the shore for a few minutes, we saw it no more. The episode was most pleasurable, and the sight so early in the trip of a great wild beast seemed to augur favorably for the future.

Toward noon the character of the country began to change. The mountains, which had been far distant from the river about Hansard, began to pinch in once more, and we saw one on the north bank that is said to be an almost sure find for caribou. Groves of slender, tall, white poplar became common, and in places the banks of the river rose in almost sheer walls. The trembling, light-green leaves of the poplars contrasted with the dark-green foliage of the spruce and fir; and the play of colors was the more pronounced because the day, which had begun with a bright sun, had turned cloudy and stormy. From time to time black thunder-heads threatened to pour a deluge down upon us, but we were lucky enough not to be in their path, and, though we saw much rain fall, we escaped except for a few scattered drops.



“When we turn the bend at the end of this reach we’ll see the portage,” Joe announced a little after noon. “It lies at the west end of that mountain ridge yonder.”

We turned the bend and many another after it, however, and still the river-banks stretched out untenanted before us. The fact was that it had been several years since Joe had navigated this stretch of the river, and it is not strange that he was in a sense lost. A gusty wind sprang up, roughening the river so much that we were compelled, because of our meagre free-board, to keep to the sheltered side.

At last, a dozen miles beyond where Joe had first announced its impending appearance, the portage burst upon our sight. It was marked by a cultivated farm, rising gently up from the river, with fields of oats and timothy hay that had been cut and put into cocks, the most noticeable feature of the view being a white-painted frame house. A number of empty scows and dugout canoes were tied up to the bank, and drawn out upon it sat a short, dumpy vessel that by courtesy might be called a steamboat.

The only person in sight on the landscape was a man hoeing in a potato-field at the top of the hill, and thither I walked while Joe was tying up the canoe. The individual in question proved to be only a hired man, as neither Seabach nor Hubble, the proprietors of the farm and of the wagons that make the portage, were at home, though both were expected back shortly. Their potato crop looked promising, as did also their oats. They even

had a young orchard they had set out the year before. The apple-trees looked thrifty enough, but whether they will produce in a region where the temperature sometimes falls as low as fifty degrees below zero Fahrenheit remains to be seen.

Messrs. Seabach and Hubble, as I was already aware, were the pioneers in this particular section, having located here several years before. They still remain the only settlers. I had been told that they were grasping in disposition, inclined to charge all that the "traffic would bear," and this reputation was borne out in Hulbert Footner's account of his trip through the country. Not only did they charge Footner an outrageous price for a few articles, but in hauling his collapsible canvas boat over the portage they punctured a hole in it and craftily plugged it up with a little axle-grease, so that he did not discover the damage until they had returned across the portage.

After looking over the farm I went back to the landing and we cooked and ate lunch. Near by there was a long, crude dugout hauled up on the bank, and, as it was the first I had seen in this region close at hand, I examined it with interest. On the bow I noticed a suspicious dark-red stain, and closer inspection revealed some coarse brown hairs.

About three o'clock a sandy-haired little fellow, who proved to be Mr. Seabach, drove up in a farm wagon from down the river. He agreed to carry our stuff over that day, and he said that he intended also to haul over the dugout that I had inspected. The dugout belonged

to a certain Ivor Guest, of McLeod Lake. Guest had already crossed the portage on foot.

A little later Mr. Hubble arrived from somewhere. He was a decided contrast to his partner, being a tall, stalwart man, with black hair and strikingly black eyes. He told us that he had once been a miner in the Klondike and had spent a winter trapping on the little-known Liard River in northern British Columbia. His chief impression of the Liard was the great number of porcupines in that region, he and his partner having killed over seventy for dog food. In view of recent experience this detail did not arouse in us any great desire to visit the Liard country.

I jokingly referred to the bloody bow of the dugout and suggested that some one had been having fresh meat recently.

"Oh, yes," he agreed carelessly. "Ivor Guest shot a deer coming down the Fraser from Aleza Lake yesterday. The carcass is hanging up in that tree over yonder, to keep it out of reach of the flies."

He pointed to an object swinging high up in a tree not far from his house.

"Guest shot it with a .22 short," he added, and this we later learned from Guest was quite correct. As Guest was paddling down the Fraser late in the evening, the deer had stood watching him until he was only a short distance away; a tiny bullet from a tiny rifle had struck the foolish animal in the neck and ended its foolish career.

When we informed Hubble that the game warden



from Prince George, a disabled veteran of the Princess Pats, had told us that he expected to pay a visit to the portage shortly, Hubble seemed in nowise alarmed and merely remarked:

"If he don't hurry up and get here pretty soon, he won't get any of the venison!"

I asked Hubble if he remembered Hulbert Footner and his partner passing through in 1912, and he said that he did and recalled an incident or two of their trip, but said nothing about the punctured boat.

"They got a hole in their canoe on the way over the portage," I ventured.

"Oh, yes," Hubble said airily, "but they had some stuff with which they easily fixed it up."

Evidently he did not wish to recall the episode of the axle-grease! Joe, to whom I had told the story, stole a glance at me and grinned, but we said no more.

Judging from our experience with Messrs. Seabach and Hubble, I am inclined to think that perhaps they have been painted blacker than they are. They carried our stuff over for the reasonable sum of seven dollars and a half, and delivered it at the lake in good shape. Furthermore, the prices at their store seemed not too high, in view of its location. I suspect that, after all, they are just alert business men and, withal, pretty good fellows, in spite of their reputation among trappers and prospectors.

At this place I made my first acquaintance with bulldog flies. These insects closely resemble the ordinary horsefly of the Mississippi Valley, but are scarcely half

its size. They flew round Messrs. Seabach and Hubble's horses in swarms, and a little earlier in the year are a terror both to domestic animals and to such wild ones as moose and caribou. Unlike mosquitoes, they do not seem to care much for the blood of man, and yet now and then one will persist in buzzing about one's head in a most provoking way, and, unless watched closely, is likely to take a nip, and a big one, out of any exposed flesh.

Seabach told us that, owing to the flies, he would not start across the portage until dusk began to fall, so we helped stow our belongings in a wagon, and then, taking my camera and light rifle, Joe and I set out on the eight-mile tramp to Summit Lake.

The trail we followed is one that for a generation or more has been used by Indians and Hudson's Bay men, and more recently by trappers and prospectors. Originally it was a mere footpath, but a few years ago it was made wide enough to admit the passage of a wagon. In wet weather the trail is undoubtedly a quagmire, but it was now reasonably dry, and walking on it was a pleasure. The day, which had been fine and then stormy, was fair once more, and we made good time as we swung along the trail through the jack-pines (lodge-pole pines) and spruce.

The trail is used more or less by Indians from the McLeod Lake country, coming and going to and from Seabach and Hubble's or Prince George to trade their fur. In several places we saw jack-pines that these Indians had peeled to get sap—mute evidence that the



Siwash is hard put to it for food and often totters on the verge of starvation.

We were now passing over the divide to a region draining into the Arctic, and this gave added zest to the walk. The portage-trail rises several hundred feet and does not descend so far on the north side, with the result that Summit Lake is about two hundred feet higher than is the Fraser at the other end of the portage. So far as I discovered from a cursory survey, there is no considerable change in vegetation, though the woods on the Arctic slope seem more open and the trees smaller. There is a decided difference in the finny denizens of the two river systems, and much the better fishing—with a rod—is to be found on the Peace River side. The greatest food fish of the Northwest—the salmon—does not, however, occur in the Arctic waters, and the Indians who live on these waters lead a much more precarious existence than do those who frequent good salmon streams on the Pacific side of the divide. Salmon, fresh or dried, is the staff of life to the Pacific coast Siwash, but the natives of the Arctic slope have no such recourse and must sometimes eat the sap of jack-pines.

As we climbed a long hill we caught up with a wagon drawn by a span of mules, and behind the wagon trudged my Prince George acquaintance, Witt, and his Siwash dog and another man whom I did not know. The stranger, whose name proved to be Matteson, had formed a partnership with Witt, and they had hired the driver and his team to haul their outfit by the wagon-trail from Prince George to Summit Lake. They made a





THE START ON SUMMIT LAKE.



ON THE DIVIDE BETWEEN PACIFIC AND ARCTIC WATERS.

The trail had been used for several generations by Indians and Hudson's Bay men.



mystery of whither they were bound, and, in accordance with the etiquette of the country, we did not ask them to disclose their destination. We inferred, however, that they had some rainbow dream of golden sands, with perhaps some trapping to fall back upon in winter, in case the dream should prove to be an empty one. Hope springs eternal in the breast of the prospector!

The wagon was too slow for us, so by and by we passed it and hurried on down the farther slope, and a little before sunset reached Summit Lake. Three or four log buildings stand at the end of the portage at the lake shore, and in one of them Seabach and Hubble keep a small stock of goods in charge of an old man whose name I do not recall. Seemingly the only other inhabitant of the region roundabout was a Swede named Gus Dalton, who has a pre-emption not far from the end of the portage and does a little trapping in winter.

Dalton's talk ran almost immediately to the subject of grub and never wandered far from it. Thus was brought to my attention a phenomenon that I had noticed before in the North Country—that fully half the conversation is about things to eat. A large part of the stories told deal either with situations in which there was a shortage of grub or else with those in which there was a superabundance of superfine edibles. Later in the trip I was to realize more fully why the talk ran so much in one channel.

As seen from the portage, Summit Lake is a clear and irregular body of water, surrounded by densely wooded shores, which rise in places to the dignity of considerable



hills. The lake lies in latitude  $54^{\circ} 40' N.$ , and its elevation above sea-level is 2,400 feet. There are moose and bear among the hills, though not in large numbers, and caribou occasionally stray thither. The water is clear, the bottom of gravel, and this evening rainbow and Dolly Varden trout were making a great commotion feeding.

At the lake we caught up with Ivor Guest, whose dugout was being brought over with our canoe, and from him we learned the full story of the deer that had succumbed to a .22 short. Guest is a pink-cheeked, compactly built little fellow, with a tiny mustache. He is a native of Nova Scotia, a descendant of a family of Massachusetts Loyalists, and he lived for a few months in Chicago, where he worked as a photographer. For two or three years he was provincial fire-warden between Summit Lake and Fort McLeod, but he now has a trading-post on Pack River, near the outlet of McLeod Lake, and is bucking Hudson's Bay for the Indian trade. He had been to Prince George on business, and like us had gone eastward on the Grand Trunk, but had stopped at Aleza Lake, had there bought a rough dugout, and had reached the Fraser by a slough that we had noticed a few miles below Hansard. I saw at a glance that he was a capital fellow, and, as he was thoroughly familiar with the route as far as McLeod, I was doubly glad when he proposed that we travel together.

It was near ten o'clock when our outfit finally reached the lake, and as we had had no food with us it was pretty late before we had eaten supper and rolled into our

blankets. Happily the night was cold—almost freezing—and we were troubled little by mosquitoes.

It had been a long but also a lucky day. Not only had we made the thirty-five miles down the Fraser, but we had also crossed the portage—either usually regarded a day's task.

It was a keen satisfaction to me, as I lay looking out at the North Star—which, I noted, was much more directly overhead than at home—to know that we were at last really on our way and were camped on Arctic waters. Before us lay the great, silent, mysterious domain of romance and fur.

## CHAPTER IV

### GOLDEN DAYS ON CROOKED RIVER

NEXT morning, as Guest had only a light load, he kindly agreed to carry Peterson's case of jam as far as McLeod Lake, and thus we were relieved of sixty or seventy pounds of weight, with the result that our canoe rode a bit lighter. It had been our intention to start with Guest, but he decided to reduce the weight of his rough dugout and to give her better lines, and so set to work hewing her down with a hand-axe. As there was danger that a wind might kick up enough of a sea on the lake to prevent us from proceeding, we said good-bye to the assembled trappers and prospectors, shoved off from shore, and paddled on our way.

"I'll catch up with you on the Crooked," Guest called after us.

A light head wind had already sprung up, roughening the surface of the lake, and we made haste to paddle across the main stretch of water in order to reach the shelter of the farther shore. To do this was a matter of less than an hour, as Summit Lake, though twelve or fifteen miles from shore to shore in places, is chiefly made up of a labyrinth of islands, arms, and channels. It is very easy for travellers unacquainted with the lake to become lost on it, and one party is said to have spent four days searching for the outlet. Those who know



the lake steer toward a conical hill of rock that goes by the name of Teapot Mountain; the outlet lies beyond this at the end of a narrow arm. There are several of these conical hills farther on; one of the most notable bears the name of Coffee Pot Mountain.

As we neared the outlet I tried trolling, for my fishing blood was surging pretty strong; but either the weather was unfavorable or the fish were not hungry, for I had no success.

Just before we reached the outlet we landed in a thicket of young spruce and cut two poles. We peeled and shaved them off nicely and cut them to a length of about ten feet. Their acquisition was a sign that new conditions of travel were impending.

Measured by the amount of water it carries, the outlet of Summit Lake is no more than a small creek. In places it contracts until it is only a few feet wide and very shallow and swift; in others it broadens out into long stretches of water so dead that even by dipping your hand down you cannot tell which way the current runs. In these quiet stretches the current is often nearly blocked with yellow water-lilies. The stream is rightly named the Crooked, for it winds here and there in a seemingly most purposeless and aimless manner, though the general direction is north. The low banks are cut by numerous arms and sloughs, and in many places are covered with a growth of willow so thick and matted together as to be practically impenetrable.

The Crooked River is almost unique among British Columbia streams, in that, except for the conical "pots"

already mentioned, no mountains can be seen from it. The Rockies lie too far to the eastward to be visible unless one could reach a considerable elevation; the mountains along the Fraser lie too far behind, and the western ranges are also too distant.

We had not gone far before I surrendered entirely to the charm of this little stream. It was so small that one obtained a more intimate acquaintance with it and its banks than is possible on a real river. The water was clear as crystal, and fish were almost constantly in sight, sometimes darting hither and yon by ones and twos, sometimes swimming in great schools. They were mostly of the variety called "suckers," but now and then we caught fleeting glimpses of more shapely fish, whose sides were speckled with small red dots. The bottom in many places was of beautiful clean sand or gravel, with now and then boulders of considerable size. As we floated over the pellucid depths the canoe seemed balanced between earth and sky, and we experienced a sensation akin to that of flying.

At intervals we came to miniature rapids, where the sparkling stream raced joyously over beds of parti-colored pebbles. The water in such places was rarely more than a foot or two deep; often it was only seven or eight inches, while the channel was frequently no more than four or five feet wide. The turns were numerous and abrupt, and it required the liveliest sort of work with our poles to negotiate these turns successfully. The water was so clear that as we floated down these swift reaches the shining pebbles seemed even closer than they



really were. We almost never touched them, but during much of the time we had only an inch or two to spare.

"I'll bet there ain't another river in the world like it!" declared Joe with enthusiasm.

It was plain that originally the stream had been less navigable than now, for along many of the shallows there lay, on either side, a line of boulders that had evidently been rolled out of the way. The channel thus created is known to navigators as the "Wagon-Road." Just who did this work is uncertain, but one tradition says that it was done by a certain "Twelve-Foot" Davis, who was once a well-known character on these watercourses. Davis derived his sobriquet not from any excess of bodily stature, but from the fact that at some mining-camp in the early days he had become the possessor of a twelve-foot fraction between two mining claims. The fraction proved very rich in gold, and from it Davis obtained a stake that was helpful in later life. He was for years a "free trader" in the Peace River country, and at one time had a little fur post at the west end of the great Peace River Canyon. Subsequently he died at Slave Lake and was buried on a high hill overlooking Peace River Crossing. I saw the grave on my way out. The epitaph on the newly erected tombstone states that "he was pathfinder, pioneer, miner, and trader. He was every man's friend and never locked his cabin door."

Occasionally we saw beaver cuttings, and two or three times noticed dams across brooks that emptied into the main stream. At one place some enterprising flat-tails had built a strong dam right across the Crooked



itself, and travellers have been obliged repeatedly to cut a breach in order to get through. The beavers had not begun the work of reconstruction since the last traveller had passed, and we found just width and depth enough to go shooting through the gap. Before the white man came with his demand for fur this Crooked River region must undoubtedly have been one of the greatest beaver countries in the world. There are still many of them, and literally tens of thousands of musquash, dozens of which we saw swimming about in the shallow sloughs.

Throughout the day we kept hoping that Guest would catch up with us, and in the water opposite our nooning-place we stuck a cleft stick bearing a note informing him that we would camp at the foot of a certain hill. We reached the hill about mid-afternoon, and once more tried fishing in a promising riffle that flowed in front of the camp. But the day, which had begun bright and clear, had turned cold and raw, and, in spite of our best efforts, we managed to catch only two small "Dolly Vardens," both of them with flies. As I had heard glowing stories of the glorious fishing along the Crooked, I was a bit disgusted and discouraged, and I said to Joe:

"I'm afraid that Crooked River fishing is a good deal like many other things of which I have heard—better in prospect than in realization."

"Just wait," he said confidently.

Later I took my rifle and set out for the hill at whose foot we were camped. On the way I crossed a small meadow in which I saw some old moose tracks. The

hill was several hundred feet high, and from its top I had a good view of the course of Crooked River and its meanderings. The slopes of the hill were composed in large part of bare rock slides, but wherever there was any soil there were a few jack-pines and a profusion of huckleberries. A faint trail led along the hillside near the foot, and I noticed scores of jack-pines that had been peeled by the hungry Siwash. In view of the abundance of berries, I had hopes that I might see a bear, but after watching for a long time and suffering severely from a torment of black flies I returned to camp without having experienced an adventure of any sort.

Our camping-place was one that had been used the previous year by some party of white men. A cross-pole resting in forked sticks stood ready to our hands, and there were also plenty of notched pothooks. Several times in the early stages of our trips we were able to make use of the paraphernalia of old camps and thus to lighten our labor. When we made a new camp we were usually content merely to drive some leaning sticks into the ground to support our pots.

Our procedure in camping was usually about as follows: As soon as the canoe touched the bank beneath the spot we had selected, I would spring out, pull the bow of the canoe up on the bank and tie the craft securely to some root or tree. I would then take out the axe and a couple of pots, fill the pots with water and mount the bank. Having selected a good spot for the purpose, I would proceed to build a fire, generally using the dry dead twigs that can usually be found within the



“funnel” of a spruce. Birch bark is also good for this purpose. Having got a fire to going, I would rig up some leaning sticks and hang the pots over the fire, after which I would rustle more dry wood. Meanwhile Joe would be unpacking the grub supply and the necessary frying-pans, *et cetera*. The baking of a bannock was usually in order, and for this purpose the folding aluminum reflector baker was “jake.” Joe was almost as good a cook as he was a canoeman, and, whatever the decision as to the menu, he invariably managed to prepare an appetizing “feed.” Pitching my tent and cutting a supply of spruce boughs for beds fell usually to me. On this stage of the trip Joe pitched for his own use a little, low mosquito tent, of a type much used in that country. Supper over, I would turn scullion and clean up the dishes, pots, and pans, sometimes aided by Joe. Later, by the light of the fire, I would write down in short and cryptic form the events of the day, while Joe would smoke a few final pipes.

At such times Joe enjoyed talking about himself and his experiences. He was fond of boasting of his exploits as a riverman and trapper, and he told many interesting stories of his experiences in these rôles. When in the settlements he affected the part of a gay Lothario, and, being handsome and a showy dresser, claimed to have had great success in this character. His accounts of his exploits in this direction were often amusing, and I venture to say that he could readily furnish a Boccaccio with ample material for a new *Decameron*.

Soon after our start next morning we saw a covey of



willow (ruffed) grouse, but I failed to get a shot at any of them. We passed along a number of "wagon-roads," one of them unusually long and rapid. Down it we shot almost as swiftly as a log descending a flume. At the foot of one such riffle we found a likely-looking fishing spot, and, as the morning was bright and warm, the trout were rising by dozens. To set up my rod and make ready was the work of only a few moments. Using a spinner that was baited with the silvery throat of one of the fish caught the previous evening, I was soon convinced that the stories told of fishing on these waters were not mere figments of idle imaginations. The hungry denizens of that delightful pool stood not upon formality but dashed at my attractive tackle as if they had been fasting for a year. None of them was exceptionally large, the biggest hardly three pounds, and the average perhaps a pound and a half, but within a few minutes I had ten or a dozen flopping over Joe's feet in the stern. Most of the fish were Dolly Vardens, a few were rainbows, and one or two were impudent and unwelcome "squawfish" that persisted in compelling me to pull them in. These last are a rather attractive-looking fish, in general appearance not unlike a perch, though not so handsomely marked. I have little doubt that they would be fairly toothsome, but we never tried them, hurling them contemptuously back and keeping only the rainbows and Dolly Vardens.

The Dolly Varden trout, sometimes known as the bull-trout and by the Indians as *sapi*, is a first cousin to the lake-trout and the brook-trout, the scientific cogno-

men of the Dolly Varden being *Salvelinus malma*, that of the lake-trout *Salvelinus namacush*, and that of the brook-trout *Salvelinus fontinalis*. In appearance it is a shapely fish, with a large mouth well stocked with needle-sharp teeth and with sides plentifully sprinkled with orange-colored spots. It is as voracious as a pike or muskallonge, as some stories I shall have to tell of it will show. In some cases the smaller fish can be caught with flies; the two I caught the previous day had been thus inveigled; but, generally speaking, they take best a baited spinner, and for bait nothing seems to beat the white throat of another fish, though bulldog flies are also fascinating. The spinner with which we had greatest success was of medium size and bore half a dozen orange beads about the size of a pea. The Dolly is a hard, gamy fighter, generally breaks water on feeling the hook, and the flesh is excellent.

The rainbow-trout is a bit of a mystery. According to some accounts, it is really a young steelhead, which is a sort of sea-trout. The steelhead in some lakes has become landlocked and is locally known as salmon. However, the rainbow is caught in sizes up to three or four pounds, and I personally caught several that were full of eggs, and Ivor Guest says that they spawn every month in the year—all of which runs counter to the theory that they are young steelheads. As the name indicates, the rainbow is marked along its sides with an iridescent riot of color. The beauty of this prismatic band baffles both description and the camera and must be seen to be appreciated. The rainbow is, to my mind,





DOWN ONE OF THE "WAGON ROADS,"





better eating than is the Dolly Varden, and like that fish, is reasonably free from bones. It can be caught at times with a fly, but most of those I took were with a spoon, either in ripples or by trolling in lakes. The rainbow is a fighter and does not leave the angler long in doubt as to whether he has something on his hook.

While we were still engaged with the denizens of that first glorious pool the snub nose of a dugout shot round the bend above, and Ivor Guest came into view. He had been detained, he told us, at the portage for several hours by rough water on Summit Lake, but as soon as possible had hurried after us, and, finding our note, had worked hard and, by starting early that morning, had caught us up. We noticed that he had greatly improved the appearance of his canoe, but she was an ill-favored craft at best, for the log from which she had been fashioned was a poor one.

"She's still a cranky beast," he said. "While I was hewing on the bow I cut a hole right through the shell and had to patch it up!"

It was now apparent that I had caught the larger fish at that spot, and as I did not care to catch any more small ones, I appealed to Guest to say whether there were any good fishing spots a little farther on.

"There are plenty of good holes," he answered readily. "It is only a little way to a much better one. I caught several big ones there last fall when I came up to catch fish to salt down for the winter."

We paddled on, and a few more bends brought us to a place where the stream broadened a bit and, on one

side, ran over a broad belt of white sand. In a hole perhaps five feet deep there lay an old water-soaked log.

"Try casting just beyond that log," said Guest.

He and Joe stopped the canoes in midstream, while I made ready. Suddenly there was a swirl of water from beside the log, and a big finny form shot swiftly away. I began casting in the direction his Majesty had fled, but for some minutes I labored in vain. Then the fish reappeared close to the log, only once more to take alarm and vanish. Once more I cast my spinner and let it lie on the white sand in plain sight. By and by along came the fish, saw the bait, smelled of it, calmly proceeded to walk away with it. I struck—in vain. Followed another flight, another return. The game was repeated, but this time there was no mistake, and I had a bunch of finny dynamite at the end of my line. Hither and yon he went, now springing out of the water, now sulking on the bottom, but all his efforts were vain, and finally he was drawn into the canoe. He was a five-pound fish, the biggest I had yet caught, but not the biggest I was to catch.

At noon we built a fire on a bank deeply covered with sphagnum moss, and there cooked some of the fish. We were not parsimonious about the number we put into the frying-pan nor about the number we put into our stomachs later. I cheerfully take oath that those fish tasted good as we sat on that sunny bank looking out over the river and talking of many things, but most of all about the country and its inhabitants, furred, feathered, finned, and human. Upon all these topics there was no one in



the whole region more competent to talk with authority than Guest.

Among other things, he told us that he had fired at and hit a coyote with his little .22 on the way to Prince George, but the animal had managed to escape him in the bush. This turned the talk to the three-dollar bounty that is paid by the provincial government for the hide of this destructive little beast. Not long before only the scalp was required, but certain ingenious persons evolved a plan for getting more than one scalp off a single carcass, and the law had to be changed. Guest told of a greenhorn trapper who caught a "cross" fox, an animal whose pelt is worth several times three dollars, and cut off the scalp intending to claim the coyote bounty.

"That's not a coyote; that's a cross fox," Guest told him when he saw the scalp.

The trapper, much chagrined, hastily hunted up the remainder of the pelt, sewed the scalp back onto it, and managed to get a goodly sum for the skin, though considerably less than he would otherwise have obtained.

Then and later Joe and Guest swapped many stories of their experiences as fire-wardens. Needless to say, I was a rapt listener, and occasionally interjected a question which, I hoped, would bring out some information that would illuminate a matter about which I was in doubt. I had thought of the comparative helplessness of a single man far out in the wilderness pitted against a raging hurricane of flame, and I asked somewhat naïvely:

"What does a warden do when he finds a fire?"

"Looks at it," grinned Joe.

Then, being fearful that I would do the fire service an injustice, he was careful to explain that a warden can commandeer the services of any one he finds, and otherwise is not quite so helpless as he seems. Undoubtedly the wardens do much good, but the most of it consists in the prevention of fires rather than in putting out those that are actually under headway. A British Columbia law provides that any one building a camp-fire must put it out before leaving, and in the more travelled districts proclamations are posted setting forth the law and explaining the importance of preserving the forests.

Unfortunately, in British Columbia and elsewhere, there are individuals who are careless of the damage they may do. When they think there is no danger of being caught, such individuals will leave fires in the most dangerous places. They are the more apt to do this because camp-fires are often built on soil that is so full of decomposing vegetable matter that, when dry, it burns like peat. Of a morning the camper finds that his fire has burned a great hole in the ground during the night and has spread over a considerable area, particularly if there happen to be any old, half-rotten logs lying half-buried in the soil. To put out such a fire requires a lot of water and labor; the temptation to let it burn is very great, as I myself experienced. The Indians, too, are responsible for many bad fires, either through carelessness or through purposely starting them. This is particularly true up Finlay River, where we on one or two occasions saw several fires burning at once.



That afternoon a mink walked leisurely along a log at the edge of the river, within twenty feet of my canoe, and then disappeared in the brush. Of course we had no desire to kill it at that season of the year.

We also saw a number of eagles, both bald and golden, and several ospreys or fish-hawks. The eagles live largely upon fish, and we saw almost none of them up the Finlay, which contains comparatively few fish. Eagles also create havoc among mountain-sheep lambs, and it is possible that the great number of eagles along the Parsnip and its tributaries has something to do with the fact that the mountains both to east and west of these waters contain almost no sheep. One big golden eagle circled round over us, uttering harsh cries. As the bird was not over two hundred feet up, I took my little rifle and fired two shots at him on the wing. The first missed, but the second cut several feathers out of him, and he darted down in such a way that for a moment we all three thought that he was done for. However, he was evidently more astonished than hurt—if he was really hurt at all—and he recovered himself and made off, flying strong.

That afternoon we came to some magnificent fishing-places, and I caught in a short time some big Dollies, to say nothing of several unwelcome squawfish. Some idea of the voracity of the Dollies may be inferred from the fact that one of those I caught had partly swallowed a six or eight inch sucker, head first; the head was partly digested, but the tail still stuck an inch or two out of the cannibal's mouth. I stopped when the fish were



still biting freely, for I take no pleasure in catching anything merely to let it rot on the ground. On northern Georgian Bay I have seen strings of thirty or more big bass that had been caught and then thrown upon the bank, where they lay poisoning the air with their disagreeable effluvia. A fisherman guilty of such an act is nothing but a hog, and deserves the contempt of all real sportsmen. That night we made big inroads upon the fish caught that day and left the rest, perhaps nearly a dozen, nicely cleaned, in the bow of one of the canoes. While we slept a crafty mink—we found his tracks in the soft mud of the shore—stole them, every one, and carried them off to some cache of his own, to be eaten at leisure. Being thus rudely deprived of all the fish we had, I was afforded an excellent excuse for catching more next day. Thus is abnegation rewarded!

That same night the coyotes howled horribly and, hearing them, I had little doubt that many a tenderfoot would have shivered even in his tent and under his blankets. I say coyotes—plural—but knowing the ability of one of these pesky beasts to create pandemonium, I would not take oath that there was really more than one.

The traveller comes upon the tracks of these animals in many parts of British Columbia, but he rarely sees the animals themselves. I followed *canis latrans* along the Fraser River and down the Crooked, Pack, and Parsnip, up the Finlay and Quadacha, and down the Finlay again, but I never actually saw him until far down Peace River, and then from the deck of a gasoline-boat. They

are not wholly flesh-eaters. In the berry season their droppings show that they devour great quantities of blueberries and huckleberries. In the matter of living creatures they must catch mice, rabbits, and other small prey chiefly, for in all my wanderings I did not find a place where they had killed anything large enough to leave signs of a struggle. I several times saw where they had lain in wait for a beaver, but flat-tail appeared to have been too sharp for them.

On the day after Guest joined us we passed Teapot Mountain, and then for about half a dozen miles our stream waltzed along very swiftly over a succession of shallow rapids, and to me this was one of the most attractive stretches of the river. The water was perfectly clear, the gravel bottom of itself was a thing of beauty and a joy, and if there is any means of locomotion more agreeable than riding down one of those rapids over that glistening bottom, I have never experienced it.

Here and everywhere else along the Crooked I was repeatedly struck with the great abundance of fish. Dollies and rainbows we generally saw in swift water, but every quiet pool was full of "suckers" or "carp," many of them big fish of several pounds' weight. They swam leisurely along in vast schools, and in places literally hid the bottom. I doubt not that with a pound of dynamite one could have killed a wagon-load.

Farther on the stream widens out and winds for miles through a vast willow flat. The current here was practically dead, and in many places the water was fifteen or twenty feet deep. The stream then flows into Davie



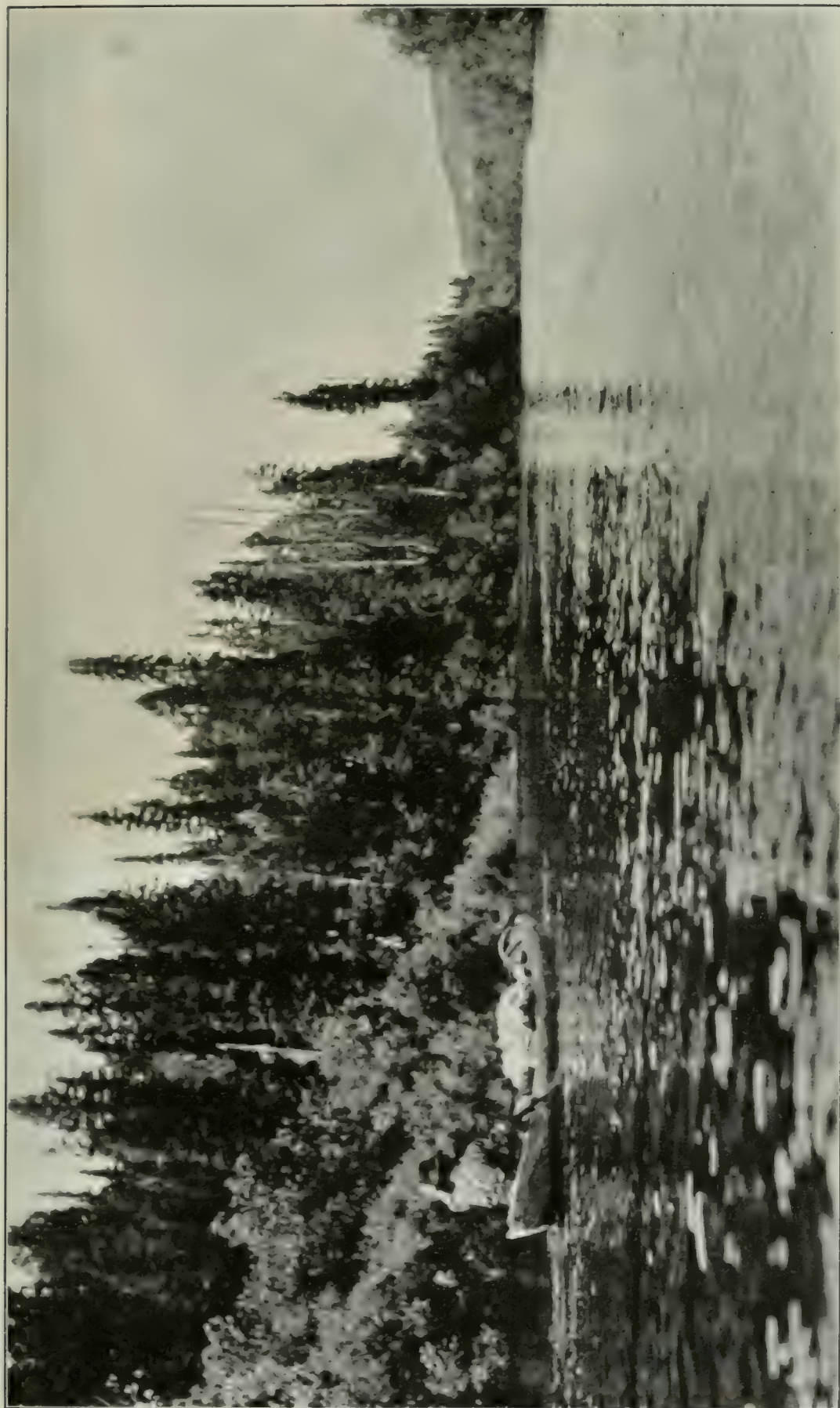
Lake, a body of water five or six miles long and in places two or three miles wide.

I saw some big Dollies at the inlet of the lake, but failed to catch any of them, though I picked up a couple of rainbows in trolling to a small island on which we had lunch. As I had already caught a goodly number of Dollies earlier in the day, we again had an abundant supply, despite the mink's raid. There were a number of ospreys about this lake, and we witnessed several magnificent, splashing dives, from which the bird almost invariably rose with a fish. I have never ceased to wonder how these birds, flying high in the air, can pick out a fish and so time their stoop as to strike it with such certainty.

Toward the northern end of Davie Lake there is a narrows, and on the slope of a hill on the right-hand side we saw a deserted cabin and the lonely grave of a young trapper named Allen Harvey, who in 1913 accidentally cut his knee with an axe and died soon after.

Some miles below Davie Lake the river widens into a dead slough that is sometimes known as Long Lake. In this section of the river a particularly broad expanse is called Red Rock Lake, from an immense red boulder. There were a few geese near the entrance to Red Rock Lake, but they were too wild to permit us to get close enough for successful shooting. Farther on we disturbed a large flock of grebes, and we also saw a loon or two, and heard several more, while bullbats were almost continually flying overhead, uttering their short, throaty roar. Shallow riffles were now a thing of the past on the





IVOR GUEST PADDLING WHERE CROOKED RIVER BECOMES A CONSIDERABLE STREAM.



Crooked, and from Davie Lake onward the river would be navigable by boats of considerable size.

The country from Davie Lake to McLeod Lake is generally more broken and is, in places, heavily timbered, for the most part with spruce, but with some small birch and poplar and a little fir, the last-mentioned tree, it is said, not being found north of Fort McLeod. The spruce is generally larger than that about Summit Lake. Estimates have it that the timber about Davie Lake would run thirty thousand feet to the acre.

Realizing that this timber will become valuable when a railroad is built through the country, a great lumber company bought up a vast stretch of it. As I understand it, the tract was not bought as timber-land, but as low-grade land at a cheap price. Before making the purchase the lumber people sent in a party of "cruisers" who sought out one of the few grassy flats in the whole region and took pictures of themselves: first, standing in the grass; second, kneeling in the grass, and, third, sitting in the grass; the object being to have evidence that the tract was not valuable timber-land! There must have been collusion somewhere, but, if so, the guilty officials had these prairie pictures to use in their defense.

One heard a great many stories of this sort in British Columbia, but whether they were true or not I shall not undertake to say. If half of them had a basis in fact, undoubtedly there was as much graft in British Columbia as in any of our own States. For years it has rather amused me to see how Canadians have lifted pious hands



to heaven and, with a holier-than-thou attitude, have returned thanks that their public affairs were not conducted on the same low plane as in the States. Personally I have long had a feeling that if they would only turn the search-light on some of their public transactions they would discover things that would jar their self-complacency. Recent unpleasant disclosures in Manitoba and elsewhere tend to bear out this theory.

When I reached British Columbia I found the province in the throes of a provincial election. Three big questions were being fought out: (1) Should the existing Conservative government be retained in power? (2) Should the province concede "votes for women"? (3) Should the province "go dry"? As British Columbia had long been overwhelmingly Conservative, the Conservatives expressed great confidence in their ability to retain control, but one caught sight now and then of straws blowing about in the political wind that seemed to indicate that a change was impending. In the backwoods the suffrage issue did not seem to arouse much interest, but there was much talk about the prohibition issue.

The few votes about Fort McLeod, Finlay Forks, Hudson's Hope, and farther down Peace River were considered a prize worth striving for. These places are all included in the same electoral district as Prince George. The Conservative candidate had deemed it worth his while to visit in person the country we were passing through. His tour had been a de luxe affair. Among the luxuries carried along were a detachable motor, or

“kicker,” and a great abundance of liquid refreshments. My man Lavoie had been engaged at Finlay Forks for the rest of the trip, and had returned with the party by way of Peace River Crossing and Edmonton. It was evident from his account of the tour that he had been rather overwhelmed by the lavish magnificence with which the great man travelled; in fact, he was somewhat spoiled for an ordinary hard journey with a plain civilian.

Toward noon of the fourth day from Summit Lake, well below the five-mile expanse of water called Kerry Lake, we came upon a Peterborough canoe tied to the right-hand bank and bearing on its bow the words, “B. C. Forest Service.” A shout from us brought a be-whiskered man carrying a tin pail out of the woods, and he was introduced as Mr. Boursen, the forest ranger between Summit Lake and Fort McLeod. He had landed to pick blueberries and to cook lunch, and we also stopped for lunch. Boursen is an old miner and prospector, having worked in many camps, including the famous Treadwell mine and around Barkerville. In the short hour we spent together he told us a number of good stories of his experiences, and we repaid him with the latest political and war news. He was the first person we had met since leaving Summit Lake.

The big task for the remainder of that day was to cross McLeod Lake, the head of which we reached early that afternoon. As we swept out of the inlet I saw before me the largest expanse of water I had yet beheld. The lake is about fourteen miles long by one or two broad in the widest place, but only part of it is visible

from either end, as there is a narrow constriction near the centre, and the channel there is partly filled by an island. The lake is surrounded by spruce-covered hills, rising shelf on shelf, and in every way it is a fine body of water.

We had been uneasy lest when we should reach it we should find it too rough for our heavily loaded canoe, but we were lucky enough to get a fair wind that helped us greatly on what would otherwise have been a very long and tiresome pull, while it did not kick up the water enough to endanger our craft. Guest stopped near the entrance in order to rig up a sail, but we were afraid to make any such venture with our canoe and so kept on paddling.

Just beyond the Narrows we met two trappers, a certain "Dutchy" and "Callis" Bell, on their way to Summit Lake and Prince George. Each had a crude boat and a dog, and each was as shaggy an individual as one is likely to meet, even in British Columbia. Both boats were heavy, the wind was dead against them, and the two men were glad of an opportunity to rest on their paddles and talk. They had been trolling across the lake, but they told us in unprintable language that the infernal fish were not biting and that they had caught only one. Their ill success was evidently due to poor tackle, for in fishing over merely a part of the same stretch I was lucky enough to haul in eight fine rainbows. We did not tarry long with our new acquaintances but paddled on down the lake, while they kept on their way up it. As the wind blew from them to us we could hear



them for a long time discussing with great freedom our appearance, outfit, and probable errand.

It took Guest longer to rig his sail than he had expected, and after it was done it did not work so well as he had hoped, partly because the wind grew lighter. We were almost at the farther end of our long pull before we saw his tiny bit of canvas pass through the Narrows. In order to give him a chance to catch up we landed on a shelving shore and had supper ready by the time he arrived. It was a pleasant spot, and in wandering along the boulder-covered beach I discovered some red berries on some trailing vines—evidently a variety of dewberry. Their flavor was beyond praise, but as they were far from numerous and were tiny as BB shot, I cannot say that I got my fill of them.

After supper we paddled on to Fort McLeod, which lay just around a bend in the lake shore, and we camped that night on Guest's front "lawn," a mile or so down Pack River.

## CHAPTER V

### FROM FORT McLEOD TO FINLAY FORKS

THE Hudson's Bay trading-post, known as Fort McLeod, stands on the western shore of McLeod Lake, just above the spot where the lake empties into Pack River. Incredible as it may seem, this post is the oldest settlement west of the Rocky Mountains north of New Mexico and California. It was established by James McDougall, acting for the Northwest Trading Company, in 1805, and was taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company when the two companies grew tired of fighting each other and consolidated. At present it consists merely of two or three log buildings belonging to the Company and of the Indian village. The residence cabin is surrounded by a neat fence, and in front of the store there stands the usual flagpole. There is a garden in which some fine vegetables were growing. The man in charge of the post was an Englishman recently come with his family from Victoria.

The Indians belong to the Sikanni tribe. In view of the fact that they have been under white influence for more than a century, one might reasonably suppose that they would have made considerable progress in the arts of civilization, but they still prefer to lead a primitive existence. Though they are fond of potatoes and other products of the soil—when they can beg them of white people—they have made little effort to raise these de-

sirable articles themselves. For the most part they are still meat-eaters and hunt and fish the year round. Big game is now scarce around the lake, but they still find an abundance on the headwaters of the Parsnip and in the Rockies to the eastward.

They kill a considerable number of bears each year, some of them in midwinter when the animals are hibernating. Through long acquaintance with the country they know many holes and caves into which the animals are likely to retire for their winter sleep, and by visiting such places they find some bears.

Disease and the fact that the squaws are adepts in controlling the birth-rate has gradually reduced the number of the McLeod Indians until there are less than a hundred of all ages and sexes. Most of them profess to be devout Christians, and the chief building of the village is a church, which is surmounted by a heavy bell that was brought in from the outside world a few years ago at the cost of much money and labor. The ringing tones of this much-talked-of importation did not unfortunately suffice to keep evil away, and a terrible scandal arose over the undue intimacy of the priest with a number of the women. The church authorities outside unfrocked the priest, but the effects of his evil example abide and give ground for the sneers of those who remain pagans.

The Indian men are said to keep a close watch over their *klooches*, or squaws, when white men are around, but among themselves the sexual relations of these McLeod Indians are very loose. Almost without excep-



tion both bucks and squaws appear to be filthy both morally and physically. I did not hear a single good word said in their behalf, and a son of the factor, a lad of perhaps fourteen, confided to me that there was not "a decent one in the lot." Mackenzie relates that when he passed through this region, the ancestors of these Indians "most hospitably resigned their beds and the partners of them to the solicitations of my young men." As these natives had never before seen white men, their liberal view in this matter cannot be attributed to demoralizing white influence.

The McLeod Indians themselves seem to realize that they are contemptible, and they have a poor opinion of any one who descends to their level. Not long before a young trapper from North Carolina had formally married one of the young squaws, incurring thereby the scorn of both whites and reds. At the time we were there almost all the Indians had gone off into the mountains to shoot siffleurs, or whistlers, a sort of ground-hog whose greasy meat is much esteemed by the Indians and from whose hide they make warm robes. The white squaw-man accompanied them, whereupon a buck scornfully exclaimed:

"First white man ground-hoggin'!"

"When I began trading," Guest told us, "I took pity on some of the old people, they were so poor and wretched, and I would give them more goods for their furs than I would to the younger, husky ones. I soon found that I wasn't trading with anybody but old people, so I had to drop the practice and treat all alike."

With the exception of Guest's place a little below it, Fort McLeod is the only settlement between Summit Lake and Finlay Forks, a distance of over two hundred miles. There are a few trappers' cabins at other points, but none of these are inhabited all the year round. Talk of a railroad from Prince George through the Parsnip country and thence to Peace River beyond the mountains caused a number of men to locate pre-emptions about the foot of McLeod Lake, but most of them grew weary of waiting and either enlisted or set out for regions where real estate was in greater demand. At present Guest is the only competitor of Hudson's Bay Company in this region. He gave an amusing account of the pious horror with which the H. B. C.'s men seemed to regard any effort to take trade away from that ancient and time-honored institution—"Here before Christ."

Guest's place is on the east bank of Pack River, a mile or so below the lake. He is aided in his activities by a husky young Swede, and at the cabin that night there were also a forest ranger and a couple of trappers who were on their way with their grub supply to their winter camping-ground on the upper Parsnip. We were greeted with the usual questions about provincial politics and the war. The trappers possessed the distinction of owning the finest dugout we saw on the whole trip. We did not measure it, but it is certainly fully forty feet long, yet so well hewed out as to be both shapely and light.

The dugout is the commonest craft on these waters, and they have some merits, being good, for example,



for poling up-stream. It is customary to give them greater beam by spreading the sides and putting in thwart. Ivor's Swede had recently grown dissatisfied with the width of one that lay at the landing, and proceeded to spread it so much that it split from end to end!

It was with real regret that we said good-by to Guest and set out down Pack River on the next stage of our journey. He had been a most pleasant companion, and his intimate knowledge of the country had rendered him especially valuable to us. We did not, however, travel on alone, as the fire ranger elected to make his return patrol to Finlay Forks with us.

This gentleman, who bears the not uncommon name of Smith, is a native of Toledo, Ohio, and is some forty years old. Earlier in his career he had been a semi-professional baseball player, and as I have always been an enthusiast for the game, both as a player and "fan," we quickly found ourselves on common ground. As we floated down-stream, he regaled us with some of his experiences and thereby gave me an opportunity to boast of one of the few things in my life in which I can be said to be lucky: namely, that I witnessed the seventh game of a world series (Detroit *vs.* Pittsburgh in 1909), that I saw a no-hit-no-get-to-first-base game (Addie Joss of Cleveland against the Chicago White Sox, with Walsh pitching for Chicago), and that, *mirabile dictu*, I beheld the only triple play unassisted ever made in the big leagues.

Smith was not the regular ranger, but he was work-



ing at the Forks with a survey party and had been sent on this patrol as a substitute. Although he had been in the West for several years and had even made a trip to the Klondike, he had usually followed the beaten path and was still something of a tenderfoot, both as a woodsman and canoeman. Of the last fact we had rather amusing proof from his willingness to float down the river any old place, caring little for the channel and showing no ability to read water; also we had proof when we came to the Cross Rapids, a succession of shallow riffles a few miles below our starting-place. In order to have enough water to float a canoe it was necessary right in the middle of the thing to make a traverse in shallow swift water full of shoals and rocks. Thanks to Joe's skilful management, we were able to pass through with ease, but Smith, in trying to make the traverse, ran aground, and was forced ingloriously to get out and wade his canoe round the rocks and shoals.

We found this section of the Pack to be shallow and fairly swift, with many riffles and numerous log-jams and "sweepers," the last being trees that have been undermined and have fallen into the river with their roots remaining attached to the shore—a rather dangerous combination for inexperienced men. Below Tootyah Lake, a body of water about two miles long by as many broad, the river is deeper and quieter. The timber along the banks consists largely of tall cottonwoods, out of which the dugout canoes are fashioned. After the monotony of dark-green spruce forests, a grove of these trees, with their tall stems often limbless for sixty feet,

their grayish-white bark, and trembling, light-green foliage, form a novel and welcome sight.

At a deserted cabin on the Pack we stopped a few minutes and dug a supply of new potatoes, rather small but excellent eating, and we also pulled some turnips for "greens." About noon we passed out of the Pack into the Parsnip, a much larger, raw-looking stream, whose greenish water, coming from the snow and ice in the main chain of the Rockies, contrasted with the clearer, somewhat brownish swamp water of the Pack. The two rivers mingle quietly between banks of gravel, perhaps a dozen feet high, back of which lie flats overgrown in places with large cottonwood-trees. It is hereabouts that the McLeod Indians make most of their canoes. Below the mouth of the Pack, on the opposite side, there rises a cut bank, of which more hereafter.

We were once more in sight of mountains. Looking eastward we caught glimpses of the western range of the Rockies, while to westward lay another range, farther distant but containing some peaks tall enough to bear perpetual snow. After several days of travel through a comparatively flat country it gave one a feeling of exhilaration to gaze at these bold ranges rising up into the blue, and to speculate as to what game could be found on their upper slopes.

The tactics of a flock of ducks that afternoon furnished us much amusement. There were fifteen or twenty of them, and we never got near enough to them to determine their species. Only one—probably the mother—appeared able to fly, but what the rest lacked



in wing feathers they made up by their fleetness in swimming. Whenever we drew close enough for them to think themselves in danger, they set both feet and wings to work and went splashing along like a hydroplane that is trying to rise in the air. We drove them ahead of us thus for fully a dozen miles, but we never succeeded in catching them up or wearing them out. When we camped we saw them take advantage of the twilight to sneak back past us on the other side of the river.

We lunched next day just above the mouth of Nation River. The name of this river and the sight of a high cut bank directly opposite its mouth recalled a grim experience that a score of years before befell Warburton Pike. Pike, as those acquainted with the literature of sport and travel in the far Northwest are aware, made a long and hazardous trip to the Barren Grounds, the land of the caribou and musk-ox, and on his way back to civilization ascended Peace River, intending to go out by way of Fort McLeod and the Fraser River. He reached Hudson's Hope in November and made the carry round the big canyon to a cabin that stood at the western end. It had been his intention to wait here for the freeze-up and then to make his journey over the ice, but the fall was late, the weather fine, and on the 26th of November he took a canoe and endeavored to proceed by water. With him went a man named Murdo, who had been with him for some time, a worthless white man named John, who had attached himself to the party in order to get out of the country, a half-breed named



Charlie from Quesnel, and an Indian named Pat from Fraser Lake. Pat and Charlie had recently come down the river from the McLeod country, and John also had been over the route a few years before, but to Pike and Murdo the region was entirely new.

Paddling, poling, and tracking, they made fair progress for a time, but a severe cold wave descended and soon filled the river with floating ice. Braving great danger, they managed in a week's time to pole and track their boat to the Finlay Rapids, a little below the Forks, but they found the river at the Forks entirely blocked, so they had to abandon their boat and proceed up the Parsnip on foot. In order to travel as light as possible they cached their guns and other stuff, including about thirty pounds of flour, intending to send back a dog team from McLeod after them.

For days they floundered through deep snow and, finally, hungry and well-nigh exhausted, they reached a river that flowed into the Parsnip from the west. There was a high cut bank opposite the mouth, and both Charlie and Pat declared the stream was Pack River. They followed it for many miles and finally came to a swift rapid that convinced them it could not be Pack River, and that they were lost. Afraid to try longer to reach the fort, they turned back toward Hudson's Hope. For ten days they were without food, except a few scraps and some bits of moose hide, but finally, in a starving condition, they reached the Forks and found the flour safe. However, it was a bagatelle among five

hungry men, who still had ninety miles of travel through a mountain wilderness before them. They were frequently delayed by blizzards, and the only game they were able to kill during the whole of their starving time was one grouse and a mouse, both of which they boiled with their flour. Charlie and Pat surreptitiously ate some of the flour that Pike was holding in reserve, and Pike came near shooting them for doing so. So great was their suffering that Pike later stated that he marvelled that the party had not resorted to cannibalism. A month after leaving the canyon, half-blind, frost-bitten, reduced almost to skeletons, they at last dragged themselves back to the western end of the canyon, and there found food.

Such is the story as Pike tells it. Charlie, the half-breed, had a different version. To Fox, the factor at Fort Grahame, he declared that Pike was to blame for the misfortune, that nothing the men could do could please him, that they decided not to attempt to guide him, with the result that they went up Nation River. Personally I do not believe this story; I have no doubt it was concocted in an effort to cover up the bad behavior of Charlie and Pat. Surely, if the precious pair really knew the route to McLeod, they would not have gone up Nation River and nearly starved to death merely to spite their employer. Charlie had begun his trip that season by stealing fifty dollars from his mother in Quesnelle; in later years he bore a most unsavory reputation. He killed his squaw and for a long time remained



in hiding for fear of punishment. He was just the worthless sort of fellow to steal flour from starving comrades and lie about the trip afterward.

It is easy to see how Pike's party made their mistake. Owing to the bad going they had travelled days enough to have reached the Pack, and when they found the mouth of a river flowing in from the west, with a cut bank opposite, Pat and Charlie jumped to the conclusion that it was the Pack. In reality, as I mentioned above, the cut bank near the mouth of the Pack is not exactly opposite but some distance below.

Along this stretch of Parsnip River there are many steep gravel banks, some of them hundreds of feet high. The water and wind have carved many of them into fantastic forms. Not infrequently one sees portrayed on them the towers and battlements of mediæval fortresses, and the likeness is startlingly exact. When we passed one of the tallest, a picture of which is shown, a high wind was blowing, and the sand and gravel were being constantly loosened, causing great clouds of dust to rise and dislodging stones and even big boulders that came bounding down the almost perpendicular slope in veritable showers. So powerful is the action of the wind on such cliffs that it even undermines big forest trees growing on the top.

In places, instead of coarse gravel, the cliffs were composed of stratified sand or silt, and such places were often honeycombed with thousands of holes dug by bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*, Linn.). One observes the same phenomenon along the Fraser and up the Finlay;





CUT BANK ON PARSNIP RIVER.



in the course of the trip we saw tens of thousands of such holes. The nesting-season was, however, past. Where high banks are not available the birds not infrequently tunnel into low ones, and the kingfishers, of which there are many along these streams, do likewise. It is not uncommon to see the large tunnel dug by a pair of kingfishers surrounded by smaller tunnels made by swallows.

The day we passed the largest of these cut banks on the Parsnip, Smith pointed out a spot at which he had camped on the way up, and he related a harrowing experience that befell him there. He had crept into his little mosquito-proof tent for the night, had smoked a final pipe, and was dozing off when out in the thick bush under the dark trees some animal began to make a noise.

"It went stamp! stamp!" said Smith, and he illustrated by striking his thigh. "The sound was not very loud, but I sat up in a hurry and looked out. The fire had died down, and I could see nothing, but again the thing went stamp! stamp! I didn't know but that it was a bear or something, so I grabbed up my rifle and sent two shots in the direction of the sound. All was still for a bit, and I had about decided that the thing had gone when again there came stamp! stamp! That was too much for my nerves. I hustled out, threw some wood on the fire, took my tent and blankets, and spent the rest of the night down on the beach close to the canoe."

We noticed a spruce that leaned far out over the river at the place where the adventure occurred, and we in-



sisted that Smidty had spent the rest of the night roosting in its topmost branches, but to our guying he merely replied by smiling and looking wise. The beast that scared him may have been a pack-rat, possibly a lynx, but more probably a rabbit. If the disturber was a lynx, Smith was in no more danger than if it had been a rabbit or a pack-rat, for a lynx is too small to be really dangerous to man, and, besides, though he can manage to put a most fiendish scowl upon his face, he can hardly be made to fight even when caught in a trap.

Many a tenderfoot has his nerves severely tried when he goes into these Canadian wilds. In the sand or mud of nearly every beach he sees bear tracks, usually those of black bears, but now and then the mighty imprint—and the great claw marks show plainly—of a grizzly. There are big wolf tracks, also, to say nothing of those of various other animals. The tenderfoot, of course, remembers the stories of his youth, which generally represent bears and wolves as continually on the prowl, seeking human beings to devour. Little wonder, then, that as the camp-fire dies down, as he listens to the distant hoot of the great owls or the indescribable howl of the coyotes, he shivers in his blanket and pulls it over his head!

Really the danger from wild animals to which the camper is exposed is infinitesimal. In the depth of winter in a wolf country a hungry pack might pounce upon a sleeping man who had permitted his fire to die down, but this is almost the only conceivable danger. This region is too far north for cougars or mountain-lions—



Reproduced from a photograph by Ivor Guest.

MOOSE RUN DOWN BY IVOR GUEST ON SNOW-SHOES.





they range only as far as the upper Fraser—and even if it were not, these animals need be little dreaded, for they are almost as cowardly as the lynx. In all the history of man's dealing with American bears I do not believe there is a single authentic instance of a bear having pounced on a sleeping man. Bears now and then come into camp in search of something to eat, or they may blunder in by mistake, but they do not come in to begin hostilities with the occupants.

Down somewhere in the Fraser country Joe Lavoie once had an adventure that startled him a bit, but left him laughing after it was over.

"I camped one night," he says, "in thick woods right on a game trail. It was as black as ink under the trees, and I had about gone to sleep when I heard something come walking heavily up the trail. It was puffing and wheezing away, and I knew it must be an old bear. As the wind blew from him to me he did not smell the camp but kept right on, and he was nearly on top of me when I let drive toward the sound with my .45 Colt six-shooter. By the flash I saw a great big, fat, black bear. I don't think I hit him, but he went right over backward, let out a bawl that could have been heard to the Arctic Ocean, and dashed back down that trail, hitting about every tree and windfall in a mile. I never saw nor heard him again, but I bet he kept going till he was all give out. Of course, he hadn't meant any harm. He just had business that took him along that trail, and, not smelling me, he walked right into camp."

Below the Nation we stopped for a few minutes at

the cabin of a Bavarian trapper named Haas, who in peace times had served in the German army. He was only one of several Germans I met in the backwoods, and they were going about their business as if war had never been dreamed of, while the Canadians were just as friendly to them as to anybody. Of course, Canada has detention-camps into which she puts obstreperous alien enemies, but she permits those who mind their business to go free. One of these Germans told me that when he went into town that spring to get a new trapper's license, the government official said to him:

"Now, of course, the law says that you must not, being a German, carry a gun. But," and he winked significantly, "*we shall not be watching you when you are out in the bush!*"

We camped that night near the cabin of an American trapper named Scott, who was long a cowman in Routt County, Colorado. He had an unusually roomy cache built up on high posts and so arranged as to be out of the reach not only of bears and wolverenes but also of rats and mice. He expressed the conviction that he would pass a comfortable winter, if he could only manage to kill a "ripe bear." By this he meant a bear that was fat enough to make lots of grease for use as lard.

Scott told us numerous stories of his experiences both on the Parsnip and in Colorado. He seemed to take special pleasure in one at the expense of a famous American naturalist whose name used to be written with a hyphen and the two parts of which have been reversed, the alleged episode having occurred in the Colorado



Rockies. He also had a better story about two Calgary tenderfeet who tried to build a fire with green willows!

"What do you think of this region for a hunting country?" I asked him.

"Well," said he reflectively, "in the old days in Routt County, when the deer and antelope and elk were bunching up, one could see more meat in a week than he would up here in a lifetime. It's not that there isn't plenty of game here. There are bear and moose maybe right now within a quarter of a mile of us. If we could see all the game there is it would seem like a good deal. But this thick forest is hard to hunt in. Down in Colorado the country was more open, and you could see the game."

A swift mountain-stream comes tumbling into the Parsnip just above Scott's cabin, and the place bears a high reputation as a fishing spot, both for sapi and also for what are known as "Arctic trout," but my luck was limited to a single sapi, which, however, was big enough to make a meal for the three of us next morning.

The morning we left Scott's, Joe saw far ahead some animal swimming toward an island in the middle of the river. It did not ride high enough in the water for a bear, and looking through my glasses I made out that it was a lynx. By rapid paddling we managed to get within less than two hundred yards when the animal landed on the island. He seemed to be tired by his effort and shambled slowly and leisurely along with the awkward, angular gait that is typical of the lynx, but, suddenly perceiving us, he broke into a gallop. Picking



up my small rifle I took a snapshot at him as he ran, but managed only to knock up some gravel at his feet, thereby increasing his speed.

On the final day on the Parsnip we passed a big gravel-bar, the head of which had recently been worked by miners using a "grizzly." The river was now more tortuous, and in places rugged hills rise from the water's edge, but there are also extensive level flats and rolling plains. The farther one goes the higher loom the mountains both to west and east, and finally one catches sight of the peak of Mount Selwyn, standing sentinel-like over the gateway of the Peace, and of many unnamed mountains—all towering high enough into the blue to give the beholder that uplift of spirit which I, at least, always feel when I come into the presence of giant peaks.

Very little is known of the immense mountain-mass lying between Pine Pass and Peace River, and there are several interesting biological questions that a thorough investigation of this region might throw light upon. How far north, for example, does the real bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*) extend his range in this region? Are there caribou to be found there, and, if so, of what species are they? Mountain-goats have been seen on Mount Selwyn and also on mountains on the north side of Peace River, but there seems to be no authentic record of mountain-sheep having been killed there. In 1912 Mr. Frederick K. Vreeland's party sought sheep in the Selwyn region without success, but they did not extend their investigations very far south. Later they killed Stone's sheep (*Ovis stonei*) in the region of Laurier Pass, and,

according to Vreeland, these sheep had some of the characteristics of the common bighorn. In 1916 William Rindsfoos killed specimens of the bighorn on Wapiti River, north of Jarvis Pass, which is a good distance south of Pine Pass. Between Laurier Pass and the spot where Rindsfoos obtained his sheep lies a wide belt of country in which sheep have not yet been found and reported to the scientific world. Biologists are anxious to discover whether this gap can be bridged, to learn whether or not the black sheep (*Ovis stonei*) and the bighorn remain separate and distinct, or whether they intergrade, as in the case of the northern species of sheep. The problem is interesting not only in itself but for its bearing on the greater problem of the evolution of species.

If there had been time I should very much have liked to make a side trip into the Rockies at this point, but such a trip would have been a long and serious undertaking, for by every account the region is exceedingly rough and the going impeded by much down timber. H. Somers-Somerset's expedition which went through the Pine Pass country in 1893 from Dunvegan were reduced to killing some of their pack-horses for food, and reached Fort McLeod in a state of semistarvation. The region east of the upper Finlay had been selected as the scene of our operations, and the shortness of the season demanded that we hasten thither as fast as current and paddles would take us.

On a memorable afternoon, when a high wind was kicking up the river so heavily that we were forced to



keep in sheltered water near shore, we floated down the final stretch of the Parsnip beneath the towering cliffs of Mount Wolseley, fought the broad, racing current of a new river that came dashing down from the north, and tied up under the bank at Peterson's at Finlay Forks.

Our approach had been noted through a spy-glass, and a little group had gathered on the bank to welcome us and, I doubt not, to learn our mission, for these dwellers in the wilderness have a large bump of curiosity. Most of them were old friends of Joe's, and I was soon introduced to Mr. Peterson, a grizzled old Dane of whom more hereafter; to Mr. Staggy, a short, fat German, wearing a broad hat and a broader smile; to "Shorty" Webber, a still shorter and stockier German; and to a couple of prospectors who had been operating a "grizzly" on some of the Parsnip bars and had washed out a big bag of "dust."

As the "Forks" may in course of time make some noise in the world, I shall describe a bit in detail how it appeared that afternoon. Flowing up from the south, the Parsnip meets here the mightier Finlay, pouring down from the north, and their mingled waters become known henceforth as Peace River. To the west of the Forks and for a short distance on the east of the Finlay there lies a level plain, heavily overgrown with timber and consisting of rich alluvium capable of growing splendid crops, as the luxuriant cabbage and potatoes in Peterson's neat garden bore witness. Around this plain, rising like the seats of an amphitheatre, tower the mountains. Those to the west and southwest, the Ominecas,





A TRAPPER'S MAIN CAMP.



PETERSON'S PLACE AT FINLAY FORKS.



are distant, but those on the north, east, and southeast stand right over the Forks. A mile down the Peace are Finlay Rapids, and their roar can be heard with great distinctness at the Forks.

It is the fond hope of the inhabitants that theirs will one day be a great city, and they keep their eyes strained ever southward looking for the coming of a railroad. The place undoubtedly enjoys some important strategic advantages, and I could give several good reasons why the promoters who are behind the projected extension of the Pacific Great Eastern to the plains country of Peace River would do far better to come by way of the Forks than to take the somewhat shorter route by way of Pine Pass. Ultimately there will probably be a railway that will follow the Peace to Hudson's Hope, and another that will run up the Finlay valley to Alaska, but how soon these roads will become realities is problematical.

Already there exists strong rivalry as to which side of the river the town site shall be. If a railroad does come through there will undoubtedly be town sites on both sides! But the palatial residences of the nabobs who make millions out of real estate, timber, and mines, will be located on the heights to eastward. At present the place has three centres. First, there is the government house, a new cabin standing on an island in the Parsnip a little above the mouth. Second, Mr. Staggy's store on the east side of the junction. Third, Mr. Peterson's new cabin and store on the timbered flat opposite. I ought to say that neither Mr. Peterson nor Mr. Staggy



has as yet advertised for clerks to help them with press of customers. In fact, it would not take a very strong team to pull the stocks of both. But it should be added that most great mercantile houses have their small beginnings!

As for the population of the region, being averse to disclosing the nakedness of friends, I shall merely say in passing that there must have been almost a score of men roundabout when I was there—including a party of surveyors, whose strength I decline to state. The winter before the Forks boasted of the society of two ladies, but it boasts no more. If all the men who have taken pre-emptions should return, the population would be increased a dozen or so. But some grew tired of waiting for the railroad, while others became inflamed with a desire to help reduce the surplus population of Germany.

It must not be understood that I ascertained all these facts standing upon the bank beneath which we had tied our canoe. The truth is that after a survey of what lay about me—in particular of the Finlay of my dreams—I entered Peterson's "store" and found Joe busily examining his beloved graphophone. The examination proved satisfactory, and soon we had the pleasure of listening to the strains of "Molly MacIntyre" and many another "classic"!

## CHAPTER VI

### BUCKING THE FINLAY

WITH our arrival at Finlay Forks our "joy ride" was over; our real work had begun. Henceforth every mile of advance could be won only at the cost of exhausting physical effort; no more lazy drifting down with the current, dipping our paddles only when we felt like making the effort. As I stood on the bank in front of Peterson's the afternoon of our arrival at the Forks and noted how the current came pouring fiercely down from the north, I realized that we must nerve ourselves for conflict; not merely for a skirmish or even for a pitched battle, but for a campaign.

The Finlay River, which should really be called the Peace, is a stream which at its mouth was, even at that low stage of water, over three hundred yards wide and very swift and deep. To make a comparison which will be understandable to Americans, the Finlay is a river larger than the Wabash and drains a rugged mountain area probably larger than Indiana.

At Peterson's we left a considerable quantity of provisions and a number of other articles which we had decided we could dispense with. We did this to lighten the canoe, but as Joe added his rifle, a great deal more bedding, and a big tent that must have weighed fully

forty pounds, the canoe lay about as deep in the water when we began to buck the Finlay current as when we reached the Forks. The tent added to our comfort at various times during the trip, but we could readily have done without it. I consented to take it along because of my growing knowledge of Joe's weakness for sybaritic luxuries.

Every old traveller in the North has experienced how difficult it is to get an outfit started away from a settled place at an early hour, and such travellers will readily understand why it was after nine o'clock, before we at last said good-by to Peterson, "Shorty" Webber, and others who had gathered to see us off, and pushed the canoe out into the river. The fact is that we had remained up late the night before and felt disinclined to arise early, both because of this fact and because of a hard frost. The temperature, in fact, fell low enough to freeze a thin covering of ice on water-pails and to "cook" the tops of the potatoes. This was the 16th of August, considerably earlier, I was told, than frost usually visits the Forks. The untimely visitation stopped the growth of potatoes for that year, but those that had been planted early were already pretty well advanced.

My weight brought the bow of the canoe so low in the water that, as I had had little experience in poling, Joe deemed it better for me to walk on shore a good part of the time, while he shoved the canoe up. On the quieter stretches we paddled, and I always helped to make the frequent crossings which were rendered necessary by log-jams and lack of pole bottom along steep



banks, whereas shallow water could always be found on the opposite, or gravel-beach, side.

Let no party set out with the mad thought that they can *paddle* all the way up the Finlay. They might as well attempt to fly to the moon. They would make a little progress on either trip, but in neither would they ever arrive at their destination.

For a few miles up the Finlay the choicest bits of land have been pre-empted, and a few cabins have been erected. Most of the pre-emptors, however, had either abandoned their claims in disgust or had gone to the war. I reproduce on p. 106 the picture of a cabin belonging to one such volunteer. The projecting logs in front furnish evidence that he intended to add a front porch to his habitation, but answered the summons of the fiery cross before he got it done. It was certainly a long way to go to fight. To reach Prince George, the nearest recruiting-station, is a matter of about two weeks of hard and exhausting effort. And even Prince George is a bit distant from the fighting front. One of the contingents, on leaving that place, displayed a banner bearing the inscription, "Seven thousand miles to Berlin!" Truly a wonderful thing is the British Empire; it has its concrete realities, some of them not altogether admirable, and it also has the spirit that gives life. As I passed these deserted cabins and gazed through the open doorways at the litter within I felt like reverently lifting my hat in honor of the gallant fellows who had answered the distant call. A finer thing than this rallying from the ends of the earth the world has never seen.

Four miles up the river we stopped at the neat cabin of a pre-emptioner named Gibson, and, though it was only eleven o'clock, he insisted on digging some potatoes and cooking a meal before he would let us proceed. Gibson is a man of middle age, a native of Ontario, but long a resident of British Columbia, and he tells of having years ago chopped timber off lots in Vancouver that he could have bought then for seventy-five dollars apiece, and that are worth a hundred thousand apiece now.

A little above Gibson's, as I was making my way through some burnt timber, a red-tailed hawk alighted on a black stub, a hundred and nine paces away, and I cut him down with a bullet from the little .32. Much of the timber along the river had been burned, and in places the open patches were covered with a thick growth of fireweed, whose gay, pinkish flowers gave a touch of brilliant beauty. This plant bears a small pod which bursts open and releases a sort of cotton that helps to distribute the seed. Some patches were badly overrun by a big worm, whose excretions unpleasantly discolored one's trousers when he brushed against the pests. In passing through some of the burns I had to watch my steps, for the ground was full of deep pitfalls left by burnt roots; in spite of my care, I several times plunged down into the holes.

That afternoon we passed Pete Toy's Bar, where years before a giant Cornishman and associates are said to have washed out seventy thousand dollars' worth of gold-dust. Toy was long a celebrated character in this region, and tradition says that he had two *kloochees* to do



his packing for him. He was finally drowned in the Black Canyon of the Omineca, and, of course, there is a story that he left a great hoard of buried "dust." His bar still exercises a fascination for prospectors, and it would seem that some time or other every one who visits the region takes a whirl at it. That spring some hopeful soul had thought well enough of it to square the stump of a small poplar and set down in pencil that he meant to file a claim there. Evidently he had a sense of humor, for he called the claim the "Perhaps Placer."

The gold in Pete Toy's Bar probably came originally from the Omineca River, and years ago there were some rich camps up this stream, such as "Old Hog'em" and "New Hog'em." But the cost of bringing in supplies was almost prohibitive, and even now it costs ten cents a pound to get freight from Prince George to Fort Grahame. When a railroad reaches the country, it may prove profitable to work over the bars with steam-dredges.

I had not gone a mile above the Forks before I came upon both bear and moose tracks. Bear tracks were astonishingly numerous. There was hardly a bar or spot of soft ground anywhere which did not show traces of these animals. At the foot of a remarkable slide which I passed late in the afternoon the plantigrade population had left evidences of being particularly plentiful. There were tracks of big bears, little bears, middle-sized bears; here papa bear had stalked along the beach on business or pleasure intent; there mamma bear and two cublets had been promenading to take the evening air. From the lack of big claw marks I could see



that all the tracks were those of black or brown bears, but the mountains that were closing in on the river from the east are known to contain grizzlies, and not long before an old prospector had been driven out by their persistent inquisitiveness as to his business in that locality. For the most part grizzlies remain in the high hills and mountains and only occasionally come down into the valleys.

We camped about three-quarters of a mile above the slide I have mentioned, and while we were eating supper we happened to notice some animal swimming the river toward the slide.

"It swims high," said Joe, after a careful look. "It's a bear."

My glasses confirmed his conclusion, and through them I watched the animal wade ashore on a gravel-bar island and then lope in characteristically lumbering bruin fashion to the little slough beyond, cross it, and disappear on the slide.

"He seems in a hurry," laughed Joe. "He must be a bachelor looking for a war widow."

"Too bad that it's too dark to go after him," I returned regretfully. "Why couldn't he have made his crossing when I was on that slide?"

At noon next day, after a hard struggle with the current, we reached the mouth of the Omineca, a wide, shallow, swift stream, which contributes about a fifth of the water of the Finlay, and is its largest tributary from the west. Immense gravel-bars extend up and down the Finlay on both sides of the Omineca's mouth,

while opposite it the bank is higher, and on this we lunched. The bank had been burned over years before and was now overgrown with poplar saplings, beneath which the ground bore a thick mat of wild-strawberry vines. The place was evidently a favorite camping spot with the Indians, and we noticed an old grave.

"This is just the kind of place the Siwash like," said Joe. "It's a lot pleasanter to them to lie round a camp and let bears and moose come to them than it is to climb around in the mountains. A Siwash backs away from anything that looks like work. Most of their camps are on spots like this—overlooking a bar—and somebody always is on the lookout. It's good-by to any moose that shows himself. If they don't see but one animal a week they're satisfied."

Looking up the valley of the Omineca, we had a fine view of the distant Omineca or Wolverine Mountains. This range, some of whose rugged peaks rise high enough to bear patches of perpetual snow, has never been thoroughly explored, but the course of the river itself is fairly well known, and there were formerly some mining-camps on its tributaries. About seven miles in a straight line above its mouth the Omineca cuts through a rocky ridge of gneiss and mica-schist, forming the gloomy Black Canyon. To the west of the headwaters there is said to be a glacier covering three square miles of territory, and there is also a peculiar natural curiosity known as the "Big Kettle." This "Kettle" is at the top of a conical mound about fifteen feet high, and from it strong puffs of a sulphurous gas escape. Small birds, bushy-



tailed rats, and even owls have been found dead at the bottom of this vent or fumarole. The Indians assert that the "Kettle" is the habitation of evil spirits, and they declare that birds flying over it are mysteriously killed in mid-air. One of the white men who has seen it reports that "about an acre around the 'Kettle' is built up of a spring-deposited rock resembling travertine. Many mineralized springs seep out, forming stagnant pools and oozy patches of reddish and yellow mud."

Not far above the mouth of the Ospica, which enters the Finlay from the eastward about a mile above the mouth of the Omineca, we were paddling quietly along under a bank in order to avoid the current, when there was a sudden scurrying about on top of the bank out of our sight, and then a crashing of small brush. To run the bow of the canoe against the bank, to leap out, rifle in hand, and dash up the bank was the work of no more than a quarter of a minute. But the poplar saplings grew very thick, and no animal was in sight. Ten feet back from the edge of the bank, however, there was a sandy spot that bore the imprint of a beast's form, and there were fresh bear tracks roundabout. A little bear had been taking his noon siesta there, not thirty feet away from us. The episode is typical of many experiences with bears. On the McLeod River some years ago a bear sneaked right through our pack-train, which was stretched out for two or three hundred yards on a trail that ran through thick, scrubby jack-pine, and none of us saw hair nor hide of him. We would never even have been aware of his presence if one of us had not



happened to notice where bruin's paw had blotted out a fresh cayuse track in the mud.

Ice formed again that night, and we were hopeful that it would put the mosquitoes out of business, for they had been very trying at some of the camps and often bothersome even on the river. I am very susceptible to the mosquito, and a few of them can drive me almost frantic. I readily agree with both the French-Canadian and Mark Twain regarding these pests. The former declared that "eet is not so much his bite as his damn hum," while Mark insisted that he objected not to the mosquito but to his business. On retiring to my tent at night I would invariably adjust the cheese-cloth front with great care and then proceed to exterminate any of the hummers who had managed to accompany me inside. When one has plenty of matches, about as good a way as any to do this is to singe the pesky creatures.

Next morning we came in sight of a great slide on the east bank, and Joe said: "That's as far up the river as I have ever been."

"Then we'll call this place Joe Lavoie's Farthest North," said I, and many times thereafter we laughingly referred to the spot by this appellation.

Henceforth neither of us had any personal knowledge of the region we were penetrating.

As if to welcome us to the unknown, three willow grouse, a mother and two callow young things, stood on the edge of the slide to watch the explorers go by, and when we turned in their direction, they perched in low

trees. A few hours later three willow-grouse were boiling in a pot over a camp-fire and ultimately found a resting-place where they would best serve the purpose of advancing the expedition.

That afternoon, as we were rounding an immense gravel-bar, I heard the distant measured explosion of a gasoline engine from up the river, and I called Joe's attention to the sound.

"It must be the Huston party," said he. "We'll land and wait for them and give them the mail we brought from the Forks."

Around the bend there presently came in sight two long wooden boats lashed together and containing five men. The party made a landing a little above us, and a tall, slender young man, who introduced himself as Mr. Huston, came down the beach carrying a caribou shank, which he kindly presented to us. Before long I became acquainted with the rest of the party—Mr. Sirdevan, Doctor Thornton, Angus Sherwood, and Bob McWilliams. For half an hour or so we foregathered there on the beach, we listening to the tale of their experiences up the river and they to our news of the war and of the outside world in general.

They had been on a prospecting trip to the Long Canyon, but as to their success in this respect they said nothing. They did, however, have many tales to tell of their hunting experiences. They asserted that on the river they had seen many geese, some of them not yet able to fly, and, as they had a twenty-gauge shotgun, they had made a great slaughter, so great, in fact, that

we saw practically no geese at all. They had made a trip back into the mountains from the Long Canyon and had there killed several caribou, a couple of goats, and two sheep. McWilliams had also "gut shot" a grizzly, but the beast had escaped into a thicket. They had the skins of the caribou with them but, of course, not the horns, which had been still in "velvet"; they also had the horns of the sheep and goats. One pair of the goat horns was very good, but the sheep horns were small. The party were quite nonplussed by the color of the sheep and by the smallness of the horns. They had evolved a theory that perhaps the specimens they had slain were very aged animals. In reality, of course, the animals were not the bighorns of the United States and southern British Columbia, of which alone these men had heard, but Stone's mountain-sheep; this fact accounted for the unexpected color, while the smallness of the horns was due not to age but youth!

While on the trip Huston had had an opportunity repeatedly to try out a well-known .22 caliber high-power rifle, and his verdict and that of Sherwood, who is an experienced hunter, was that it was not suitable for big game. They declared that only repeated shots in a vital spot would bring down caribou. Their experience tends to prove what really is not a matter for serious dispute, namely, that a .22 caliber gun, no matter what its striking energy may be, is not the weapon to use on big game. Big game can, of course, be killed with it, but it has not the stopping power of a larger-caliber gun, and it is far from suitable for a country in



which at any time the hunter may be called upon to drop a grizzly.

Early next morning, while we were still in camp, a family of Fort Grahame Siwash paddled down the river past us, and Joe talked to them a little, but they did not stop. It was a most unusual Indian family, being so large that it took two canoes—a big dugout and another craft of spruce bark—to hold all the big and little Siwash that made it up. If all the aboriginal couples in that region had followed the example of this worthy pair there would be no “race suicide” in the Finlay valley and no gradual decline in the Siwash population. I gazed at the unusual sight with approval, but I could not help reflecting that it must take a lot of rustling on the part of papa Siwash and his grown-up son to keep all those mouths filled with moose meat.

Throughout most of its course the Finlay occupies part of a most remarkable intermontane valley, which is thus described by Mr. McConnell, of the Canadian Geological Survey:

“The great Intermontane valley . . . forms one of the most important topographical features of British Columbia. It crosses the international boundary about longitude  $115^{\circ} 10'$  W. and runs in a direction N.  $33^{\circ}$  W. along the western base of the Rocky Mountains, separating the latter from the Selkirks and other ranges on the west, for a distance of over eight hundred miles. It is entirely independent of the present drainage system of the country, as it is occupied successively, beginning at the boundary, by a number of rivers belonging to

distinct systems, among which are the Kootanie, the Columbia, Canoe River, the Fraser, Bad River, the Parsnip, the Finlay, and the Tochieca. . . . Its width varies from two to fifteen miles, and it is everywhere enclosed, except for some distance along the west bank of the Parsnip, by mountain ranges varying in height from 3,000 to 6,000 feet or more above the valley. . . .

“The age of the valley has not been worked out, but it is evident that it long antedates the inception of the present drainage system of the country, and may have been in existence before the elevation of the Rocky Mountains proper. Rocks of Tertiary Age (probably Miocene) are supposed by Doctor Dawson to underlie part of the southern portion of the valley, while sandstones and conglomerates of Laramie Age are present along both the Parsnip and Finlay. Glacial deposits are present throughout its whole extent.”

The Parsnip-Finlay section of this great valley contains timber that will ultimately be of value to the world, though much of the forest has recently been burned, while the rest is comparatively small stuff that has grown up after old fires. There are also hundreds of thousands of acres of land that can be used for agriculture. Doubtless, however, the rôle in which this section of the valley will chiefly figure in the future will be as the natural route for a railroad to Alaska, the building of which cannot be, I take it, many years distant.

Throughout the hundred and sixty miles that the Finlay follows it the floor of the valley consists, except



for one short stretch at Deserter's Canyon, of deposits of sand, gravel, and soil carried thither either by the river itself or by glaciers of an earlier period. The course of the river, except for a few stretches, notably one of about a dozen miles above the entrance of the Ospica and another above Paul's Branch, is devious and crooked to the last degree. The current is very rapid, averaging perhaps four or five miles an hour, with many stretches where it is much swifter and a few where it is slower.

In certain places, for example below the Omenica, great tracts of ground, ten, twenty, forty, even a hundred acres, had slid down to the river, carrying forest and everything with them. Below Paul's Branch we saw a slide that had come down the spring before and that had for a time completely blocked the river, which there is approximately two hundred yards wide. Hundreds of thousands of tons had been precipitated into the stream, and what remained formed a large island in the middle of the river.

Another feature of the Finlay is the rapidity with which it changes its course. The sandy, gravelly soil is exceedingly susceptible to erosion and requires hardly more than a touch of water to set it crumbling and dissolving. During the spring floods the fierce current will undermine acres along a bank in a single night, cutting new channels and sweeping down the forest trees by thousands. When the flood recedes, many of the trees that have just fallen retain a hold by their roots upon the bank and, lying half submerged, form dangerous



sweepers, of which the canoeman must be wary or else come to grief. By far the greater number of trees, however, are swept completely away. Most such trees are tall, slender spruce, and the grinding ice and the pull and thrust of the current forcing the trees against banks and other obstacles, soon strip off the branches, leaving the trunks as bare as fishing-poles, but with a matting of heavy roots still remaining at the butts.

When the river is falling, such trees go drifting down across the gravel-bars top first, their roots catching at the gravel beneath and leaving long furrows. Many such trees finally hang upon the bars in this way and remain there until the next high water drifts them off. Most trees, however, ultimately find a grave in the vast log-jams that form at the heads of islands, along the shores, and across the inlets of old channels. There are thousands of such jams, and many are of immense extent. The longest that I recall lies some distance below Pete Toy's Bar, is well-nigh a mile in length, and contains tens of thousands of logs.

In fighting one's way up-stream, one must perforce keep in the quieter water along the bank, and often the canoe must pass close beside logs beneath which the current sets fiercely. Only constant watchfulness and skill can prevent the canoe from being drawn beneath such logs. Should this happen at a single log, there would remain some hope of saving life and the canoe, but a jam is a different matter. The current usually sucks under the jams with resistless power, and instances have occurred in which men and boats have been drawn under

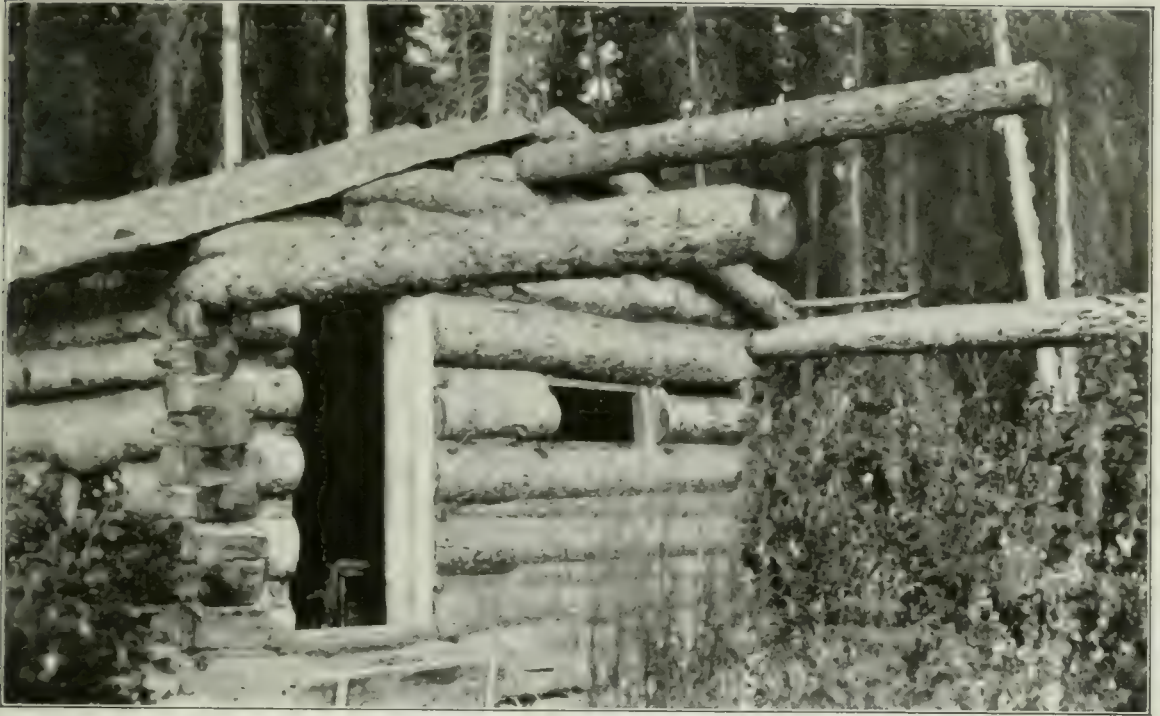
and have never been seen again. Unless the occupants can manage to spring upon the jam before their craft goes under it, their fate is sealed.

In our ascent we were careful to give the jams as wide a berth as possible, and would always undergo the strenuous work of making a traverse to the other shore rather than attempt to pass up near a jam against which the current set. Now and then, though very rarely, we found jams on both sides, and in such a case we would take the side that seemed less dangerous.

In a rather wide experience with rivers, I have never seen one so profusely furnished with log-jams as is the Finlay, and neither do I know one that is in the same class with it as regards sand and gravel bars. Much of the vast floor of the valley is an immense bed of sand and gravel, and the stream in its constant shifting digs this up in immense quantities and deposits it in bars of perfectly enormous extent. In places, also, the river has cut a deep channel down into the gravel, so that one passes immense gravel cliffs, hundreds of feet high and even miles long. These cliffs occur on several stretches of the river, but are particularly noticeable in the stretch lying between the Ackié and Paul's Branch. I believe I am speaking conservatively and after due consideration when I say that there is enough gravel in the Finlay valley to supply every pike in the United States for a hundred years.

Some of the gravel-bars are very beautiful, and I found it a real pleasure to walk over them. The stones and pebbles are of every imaginable shape and color,





CABIN OF A TRAPPER WHO WENT TO THE WAR.



THE LARGEST LOG JAM THAT I RECALL LIES SOME DISTANCE BELOW PETE  
TOY'S BAR.





and many have been given a high polish by the endless action of water. I am a great admirer of boulder walls and pillars, and it was a source of real regret to me that I could not select a few carloads of those gorgeously beautiful stones for use in building a boulder-concrete house!

The bars, unless they lie where they are swept clean every year by swift high water, do not long remain barren. The seeds of balsam-poplar are profusely scattered there by the agencies of nature, and in a few years the bar is covered with a dense thicket. Spruce, too, finds a foothold, and in a few decades a fine forest stands where the river once ran.

Meanwhile the river has been careering about, tearing down forest elsewhere, but there comes a time when it once more shifts back toward its old location and begins undermining the new forest. In hundreds of places the traveller on the Finlay sees in banks that are being washed down the half-rotten timbers of log jams of generations before, jams that have been covered over with soil and overgrown with trees and now are once more exposed to view by the relentless river.

Thus the history of the Finlay and its valley is a story of endless change, of ceaseless destruction, construction, and again destruction.

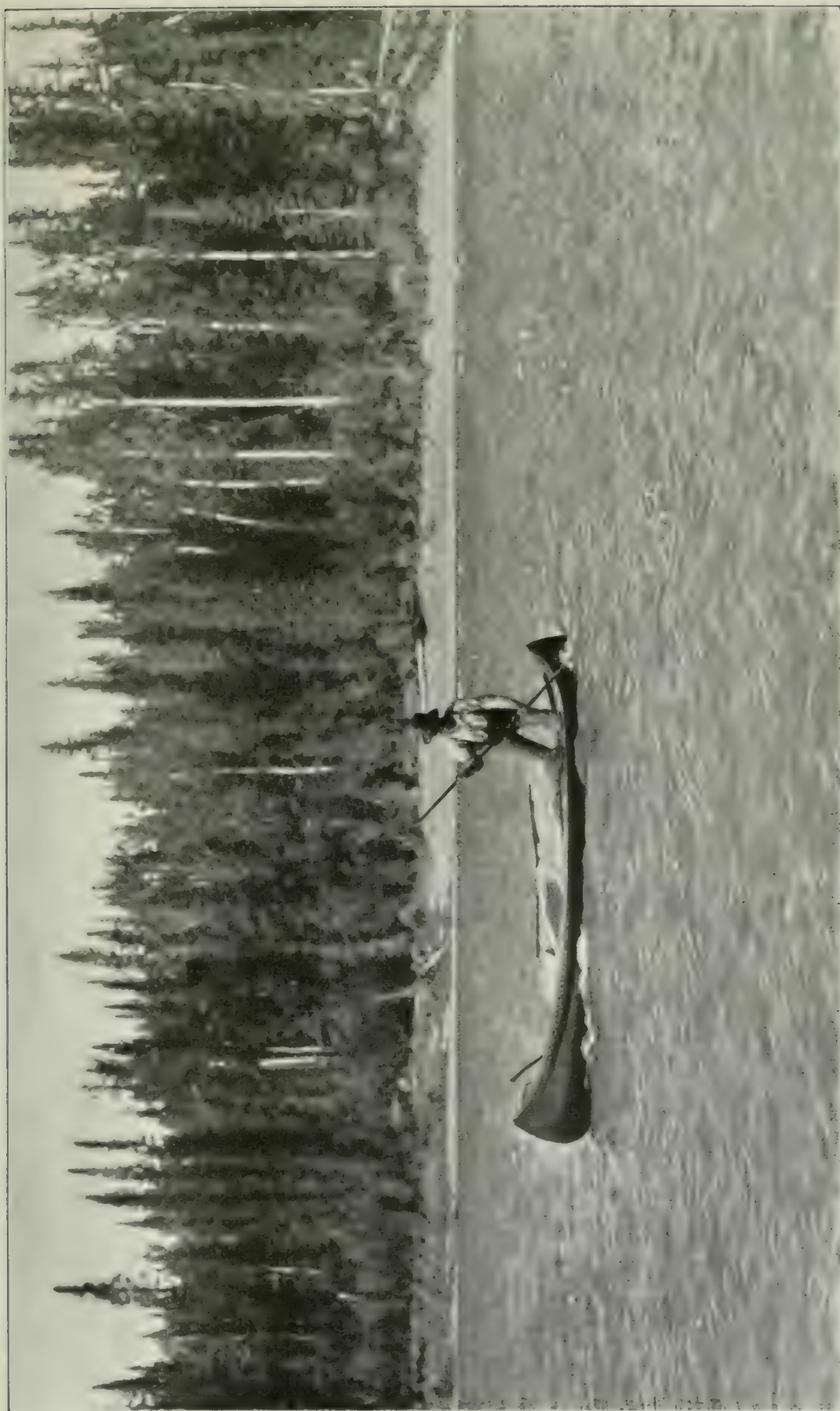
In some places the stream was split into half a dozen channels, surrounding numerous islands, and it was often difficult to determine which channel we ought to take. Log jams and bars were ever present, and we encountered rapids that could be surmounted only by lining the

canoe up or by springing overboard and walking the craft up. To cross from one side of the river to the other invariably provoked a fierce battle, and not infrequently it was only by using our last ounce of strength that we managed to cross above some dreaded log-jam. Such work was wearying in the extreme, even to me, who did only a small part of it, and I could not but admire the strength, the skill, the ready resource with which Joe invariably solved every problem that presented itself. As a canoeman he was undoubtedly a past master. Though there were scores of times when a slight mistake could easily have been disastrous, he never made it.

Often we had magnificent views of mountains rising high on both sides of the stream. On the left lay the gneissic ridge which begins at the Black Canyon of the Omineca and runs northward along the Finlay, finally culminating in some fine rugged peaks that tower a full mile above the river. On the right the main Rockies rose chain after chain, and through passes in the outer range we now and then caught splendid glimpses of rugged white peaks which seemed to challenge us to come and climb them. Far ahead the mountains pinched in upon the river, while summit upon summit, each seemingly taller and more rugged than the one before it, burst into view. Of scenic wonders there was assuredly no lack.

We were in good shape to appreciate these marvels, for, though we were working hard, we were living well. In addition to our ordinary provisions, we had the caribou shank that Huston had been good enough to give





POLING HER UP A RIPPLE.



us and also several grouse, and both caribou and grouse went well either fried or in a mulligan.

Mulligans are made by boiling bits of meat—the more kinds the better—with a little of everything else that is obtainable. One mulligan on this stage of the trip contained some caribou meat, a ruffed grouse, some bits of pork, rice, potatoes, dehydrated corn, canned tomatoes, macaroni, salt, pepper, a dash of dehydrated celery, and probably some other ingredients that I have forgotten. The celery gave the added touch needed to transform the mulligan from merely good food into a dish fit for the gods, and I advise every one who goes on such a trip to take along a can of this wonder-working article.



## CHAPTER VII

### A LUCKY DAY

LATE on the fourth day from the Forks, after a strenuous time bucking swift water, we camped in a grove of spruce beside the river and passed as comfortable a night as the mosquitoes would permit. The Huston party had camped there on their way up, and near the ashes of their camp-fire I picked up a loaded 20-gauge shotgun-shell. Evidently they had had great quantities of ammunition or else had been very careless with it, for I later picked up another such shell at their camping-place at the foot of Deserter's Canyon. We knew that we could not be far from Fort Grahame, and, in fact, we had had hopes of making the post that afternoon, but had been disappointed. Around us lay a perfect labyrinth of sloughs, channels, and islands, forming a region eminently fitted to breed a particularly ferocious variety of the pest above mentioned.

When we set out next morning, we felt confident that an hour or two would bring us to the post, but noon came and passed and still we were fighting our way upstream with no fort yet in sight. About two o'clock Joe was poling the canoe along near a great gravel-bar and I was making a short cut overland toward the head of the bar when an adventure befell us.

The gravel-bar on which I was walking was about

half a mile long and perhaps two hundred yards wide; it was, in fact, an island, being cut off from the forest-covered bank at its back by a shallow slough, which in places was only a few feet wide. It was highest next the main river, up which Joe was poling the canoe, and near the river there was a tangle of drifted logs. From where I was walking I could see behind this jam to the head of the bar, but I could not see the river side of the jam. Thinking that the jam might form an obstacle in getting around which Joe would need my assistance, I walked out toward the river to get in touch with him. When I reached the low ridge close to the shore, I noticed that Joe had stopped the canoe, and when he saw me he motioned wildly for me to hurry to him and pointed up the river. I looked in the direction indicated and saw an animal that I recognized at once as a bear, striking out from the pile of logs toward the opposite bank.

To run down to the edge of the water, wade out in the shallow water to the canoe and scramble aboard was the work of a moment. Little was said, and that in a low voice, but we both fell to with our paddles and soon had our craft leaping through the water toward the swimming bruin. As we went we had time to cast some hurried glances about us and to size up the situation. The river at this point was fully two hundred yards wide, and on the farther side rose a steep bank, perhaps ten feet high, lined with "sweepers." The current, which was very swift, set in toward this bank and ran much more rapidly than on the opposite side,

"That current will help us," said Joe in a low voice. "He'll feel it pretty soon."

Sure enough, it was not long before the bear began to have a hard time stemming this current; in fact, it began to sweep him down a bit.

Whether or not the beast up to this moment had seen us I am not positively sure, but he must have done so. From a later study of the tracks on the gravel-bar I decided that he had been fooling about in the jam, and had either seen or smelled me and had decided that he would better swim the river instead of crossing the bar in full sight of me and trying to reach the forest beyond. Probably he also heard Joe's pike pole striking the gravel bottom. However, it is barely possible that he had neither seen, heard, nor smelled either of us, but had chanced to choose this inopportune time to cross the river on some errand.

In the hope of flustering the animal and perhaps causing him to turn back or swim directly up-stream we now shouted loudly, creating what to him must have seemed the very deuce of a racket. For a few seconds he paused, turned his head in our direction, lifted himself as high in the water as possible, and surveyed us. Then he once more struck out as hard as he could swim for the opposite shore.

But bruin had made an unfortunate choice when he decided to cross the river at that particular time and place. Although he must have been close to three hundred yards away when we first set out in pursuit, we travelled so fast and the current carried him down-stream



so much that it presently became apparent that before he could get ashore he would be exposed to great danger. The current was our ally, and fight it as he would the bear could not escape from the trap into which he had got himself.

When we were within sixty yards I laid down the paddle and caught up my heavy rifle.

"Don't shoot until he is close to the bank," Joe cried warningly. "If you kill him in deep water he'll sink sure."

Of this fact I was already aware, for Gibson had told me that only the year before he had shot a grizzly in Parsnip River, and the beast had sunk like a stone. So I waited until the bear neared the shore, and meanwhile Joe paddled a little closer. When bruin was within a dozen feet of the bank I aimed at the point where his back disappeared in the water. I did not want to shoot at the head, for I knew that the heavy bullet would tear that portion of his anatomy to smithereens and would ruin the skin. It was like shooting at the edge of a saucer at fifty yards, and the canoe was bucking like a bronco in the heavy swell, but I seemed to strike the spot where I aimed, throwing up a great splash of water and penetrating, I then had no doubt, the animal's back. He kept on, however, and I sent in another shot that threw up another splash, though exactly where it struck I could not see. Just then the animal's forefeet touched the bank and he pulled himself partly over a submerged log, only to fall back into the river. I attributed this to his wounds, and he seemed so weak that for a moment

I hesitated to fire again, believing he was done for. But by another effort he managed to pull himself out of the water over the log and went scrambling up the bank with such rapidity that I hastily fired again. At the shot he lost all holds and fell back with a resounding splash into the river.

We hastily ran the canoe up to the bank, and I seized him before he had time to drift away. He was beyond even struggling, and by dint of much heaving and tugging we managed to get him into the canoe. His weight put the gunwales down almost to the level of the water, but by careful handling we got back to the other shore and soon had him out upon the beach.

At first Joe was confident that it was a young grizzly, but a closer examination of the claws and pelage finally convinced us that it was a brown bear, and not a very large one at that. The sex was female.

Brown bears, it may be remarked here, are in this section of Canada merely a color phase of the black bear. It is not an uncommon thing to see a she bear with one black and one brown cub, and Lavoie says that once on Willow River, a tributary of the Fraser, he saw a she with two black cubs and one brown one. Black is by far the most common color. The brown animals are of varying shades. A skin I saw at the forks—from an animal trapped by Lavoie the winter before—was a light yellow in color, almost a straw color. Even experts are often fooled into believing that brown bears are grizzlies or that grizzlies are brown bears, and have discovered their mistake only after a close scrutiny. One



of the main distinguishing features is, of course, the claws, which are comparatively small and short in the "brown" bear and very large and long in the grizzly. Even Mr. Wright, of Spokane, who is the author of two excellent books on bears, and who probably knows more about these animals than any other man living, confesses that once he attacked with a knife a supposed brown bear that two of his dogs had cornered, and that he fought the animal for some time before he realized that it was really a grizzly.

When the animal we had killed was skinned, I was astonished to discover that only one bullet—the last—had found its mark. Evidently the first had struck a bit too low and had glanced from the water, while the second, Joe said, had gone a trifle too high. The experience helps to explain why it is that game sometimes manages to "walk off with so much lead"—the real reason being that not much, if any, of the lead has hit the animal at all. If I had not fired the third shot and the bear had escaped, I should always have said and devoutly believed that he got away badly wounded.

The final shot which had done the business had struck just at the junction of the shoulders and had penetrated the body cavity, tearing heart and lungs into shreds. Evidently the beast had never drawn another breath or had another heart-beat.

The animal was very fat and, considering the fact that it was killed on the 20th of August, the pelt was in good condition, though not yet prime. The stomach was filled almost to bursting with blueberries and high-



bush cranberries, nor had bruin been at all choice in rejecting the stems and twigs on which the berries grew.

Taking the skin and the hindquarters of the bear, we once more embarked and, on rounding the next bend, came in sight of Fort Grahame. We had killed the bear almost in the front yard of the fort !

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAST OUTPOST

THE post we were now approaching stands in a small clearing on the east bank of the Finlay, with a background of Rockies rising up behind it. Although dignified with the name of "fort," it consists merely of a rough log store, a log storehouse, and a couple of smaller cabins. Scattered here and there behind it stand three or four log shacks built by more enterprising Indians, and there are usually a few Indian tents pitched in the neighborhood.

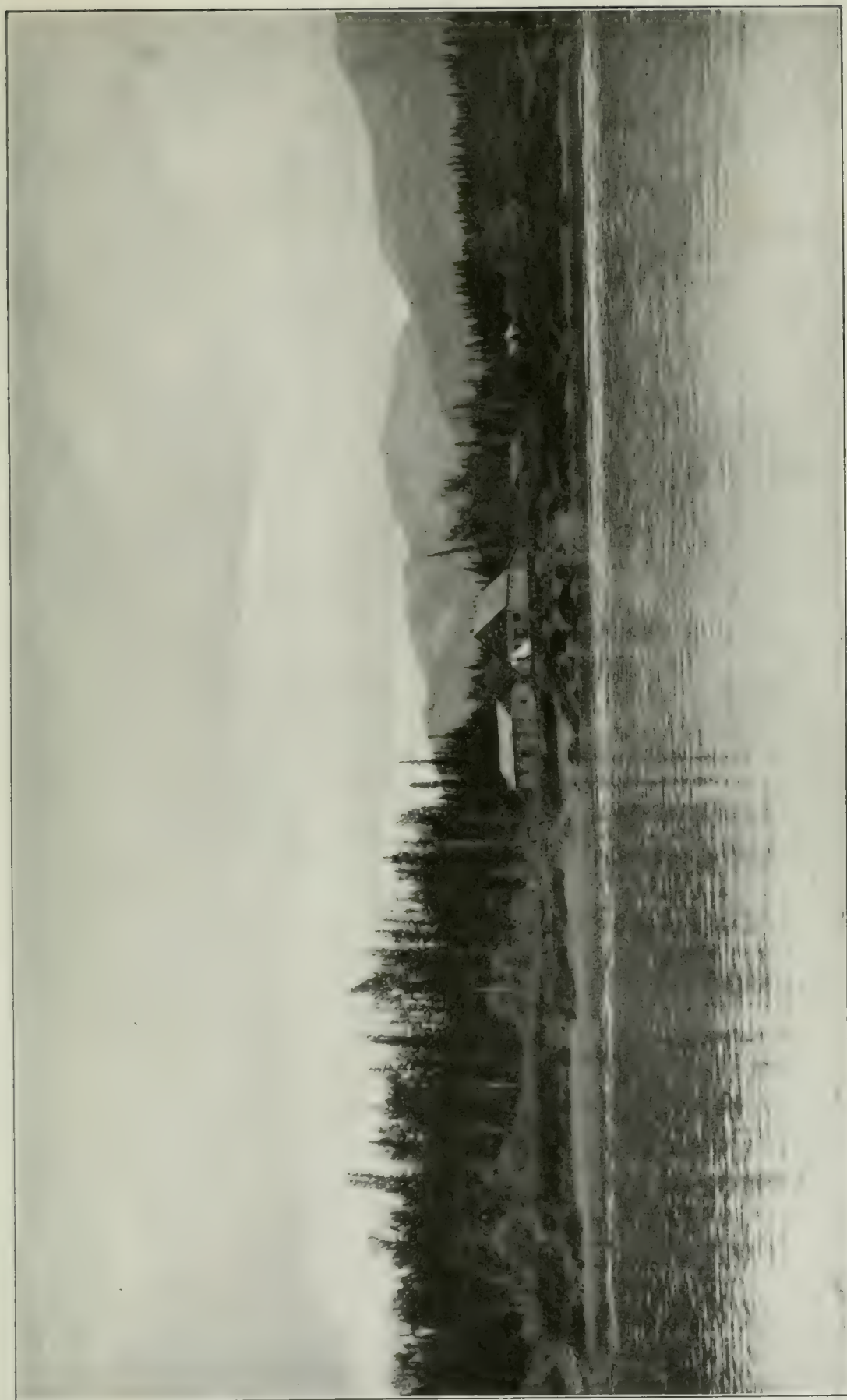
Half a dozen Siwash and several snarling dogs had gathered on the bank to watch our approach, and we were cordially welcomed to the post by the man in charge, Mr. William Fox. Except for a short interval of about three years Fox has been stationed at Grahame since 1893, and has been associated with the Finlay region much longer than any other civilized person who now resides there. He came originally, he told us, from Manitoba, and he is himself partly of Indian blood. His first white ancestor in America was an Irishman named O'Connell. This man, being stationed on Hudson's Bay at a post of the Great Company, contracted an alliance with a Chippewayan girl and later became a "free trader." Subsequently the family settled on Red River

in Manitoba, and for some reason changed their name to Fox. The present Mr. Fox years ago married a daughter of Pierre, chief of the Grahame Indians, and by her had a number of children, but his wife is now dead, and the children are outside being educated. I found Fox well informed about the world, a great reader, and very obliging.

When we came to unload the bear meat and skin, I noticed that the Indians, who were squatting on the bank watching the proceedings with interest, scowled darkly, and it was quite evident that they were far from pleased. To their mind the Finlay region belongs to them, and all the game within it, and they resent the killing of game by white men. From scattered sentences we gathered that they were especially displeased because the animal had been killed so close to the fort. However, we ignored their scowling faces and blandly told them that if they needed meat they would find the fore-quarters of the bear on the bar below. Three or four of them soon embarked in a dugout and later returned with what remained of the bear. For once I had the pleasure of killing meat for the aborigines!

These Indians are of the Sikanni tribe, as are those about Fort McLeod. In color, cast of countenance, and lack of beards, they are decidedly Asiatic in appearance—even more so than are the Redmen farther east. If one of them were dressed in Japanese costume and turned loose on the streets of Tokio, only his behavior would betray the disguise. The more I saw of these north-western Siwash the more inclined I became to accept the theory that America was first peopled from Asia by





FORT GRAHAME FROM ACROSS THE FINLAY.



way of Behring Strait—either that or else Asia was peopled from America, for I see no real reason why one is not about as likely as the other.

Aleck, who is a son of Chief Pierre and who is the best hunter in the tribe, did not go with the others after the bear meat but remained sitting on the bank, smoking his pipe and talking to us. I found him to be a really superior Indian, speaking fair English (which most of the tribe cannot do), and having some idea of the world outside, which none of his people have ever seen. He told me that the spring had been very bad for hunting, and that the cold weather had held on so late that the “whistlers” had been slow to fatten. He and his family had been up in the mountains after these animals to make robes, and to get the fat, but had found the animals so lean that they had come back to the post.

At that time I had some notion of penetrating the mountain range I desired to examine by way of the Ackié, a stream that empties into the Finlay from the east, about a dozen miles above Deserter’s Canyon, and I tried to draw Aleck out as to the character of the country along that river. I struck fire at once.

“Prospectors come into country, scare out all the game,” he muttered. “Indian kill no meat. Indian starve.”

Evidently he did not relish the idea of our going into the Ackié country, which, we learned later, was his own particular hunting-ground. Lavoie now took a hand.

“This not prospector man, this government man,” he said impressively. “He no kill game, except for little



meat; he take 'um picture bears, moose, caribou, sheep, goats, for magazine."

Alas, poor Aleck! He swallowed this tale with avidity and seemed greatly relieved to hear that I was neither a prospector nor a hunter, while he was powerfully impressed by the information that I was a "government man," for these aborigines have a vague terror of and respect for the mysterious "government." Joe's description did not precisely square with the real facts in the case, but it hardly seemed necessary to disabuse Aleck of the impression thus created. So I let him look in my Graflex, arranged to take his picture next morning, and we became confidential friends. Henceforth any question I asked him about the Ackié or any other region he made haste to answer to the best of his ability.

We gave Fox one of the bear hams, and we had supper and breakfast at his cabin, we contributing, of course, to the meals. He praised our mulligan with celery flavoring highly. He is able to live pretty well at the post, as the Indians generally keep him supplied with fresh meat, and he has a garden in which he raises potatoes, turnips, beets, cabbage, and rhubarb. His potatoes, like those at the Forks, had been frozen to the ground by the frost of August 16, but some of the hardier vegetables were still flourishing.

A trail cut out by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police in the days of the Klondike rush passes Fort Grahame on the way from Fort St. John on Peace River, two hundred and eighteen miles distant, to the Tele-

graph Trail and the Skeena River, but it has not been kept cleared and is now practically impassable. This trail was at one time practicable for pack-horses, but there are now no horses in the Finlay country. The Indians of the region have never had horses, but depend wholly on canoes, dogs, and shank's mare for transportation purposes.

At the time Fox first took charge at Fort Grahame these Indians numbered about two hundred, but some of them have removed to Bear Lake, while others have died, and there are now only about seventy bucks, klooches, and children. Physically they are a better-looking lot than either the McLeod Lake Siwash or the Beavers at Hudson's Hope and Fort St. John, though some of them are afflicted with tuberculosis and other diseases. They claim to be Christians, and at the head of the graves in their well-kept graveyard on a hillside opposite and above the fort they place crosses, but Fox says they have had only one visit from a priest in twenty years. Unlike the Crees and some other tribes east of the mountains, they do not have a written language, but they are able to communicate certain ideas, such as where a party has gone or whether it has killed game, by signs scrawled on blazed trees or stakes. We saw many of these signals along the river.

These Indians are still strictly in the hunting stage. Fox told us that a few had tried raising potatoes, but that they had lost interest before the crop was made. They live almost entirely on meat, eked out by what supplies they obtain at the post. From the store they



expect to buy part of their clothing, a little flour and other luxuries, and they mean to keep themselves supplied with guns, ammunition, tea, and tobacco, in exchange for skins and fur. As the cost of bringing supplies to the fort is ten cents per pound, and even flour sells for twenty-two cents a pound, it is clear that the Siwash cannot buy "white man's grub" in any very large quantities.

The supplies are brought in by a freighter named Ross, who does the work with a long, wooden boat. As we descended Parsnip River we had met him and his crew—one white man and a Siwash—returning from their second and final trip of the year.

Bear, sheep, goat, caribou, and whistlers are slain occasionally and lend variety to the aboriginal bill of fare, as do berries of various kinds, but moose is the staff of life, with rabbit standing second. Fox estimates that twenty years ago these Indians killed fully three hundred moose a year, but there are fewer Indians now and also fewer moose, so that the annual kill is much smaller. In winter the squaws snare great numbers of snow-shoe rabbits, and it not infrequently happens that a camp has nothing whatever to eat except rabbit meat. This state of affairs is considered the next worst thing to starving, as rabbit is not very toothsome as a steady diet and seems to have little sustaining power. Still rabbits are better than nothing, and when they are scarce, which happens about every seven years, both lynxes and Siwash are likely to be frequently on short commons.

The Fort Grahame Indian does not care much for



mountain-goats, of which there are many on certain ranges of mountains in the Finlay country. In some localities, unless very hungry, the Siwash hunter will not hunt them at all, as they eat a variety of wild garlic which gives the meat an unpleasant taste. Where garlic is not so common the meat is better, while the young animals are, of course, the better eating everywhere. Far up on the Fox River range I later saw a tiny mountain lakelet beside which some Siwash had killed a mountain-goat kid and had picked the bones clean.

The Siwash kills many black and brown bears for their skins, flesh, and grease, which latter he renders out—that is, his squaw does—and sometimes sells to trappers for fifty cents a pound. There are some grizzlies in the region of the fort, and Fox pointed out to us a mountain that is more or less frequented by these animals, but the average Siwash “hasn’t lost any grizzlies,” and very few of these bears are killed. Many a hunter on seeing one of the great lumbering beasts has quietly stolen away without molesting him. In hunting bears the Indians are greatly aided by their dogs, big mongrel-looking animals, in which “husky” blood generally predominates.

Two Indians have been injured in the Fort Grahame region by grizzlies within the knowledge of Fox. One of them, a hunter, was walking round an uprooted tree with his gun on his shoulder, when a big bear suddenly rose up from behind the stump and gave him a slap that sent him spinning; the bear then moved off without troubling the Indian further. In the other case a child

left a camp near Pete Toy's Bar to get a pail of water and met a grizzly, probably a she with cubs, and was torn to pieces.

The hunting-ground of these seventy Fort Grahame Indians is a region of enormous extent. They have subdivided it among the various families, like the principalities of a feudal kingdom. Thus old Pierre and his son Aleck hunt and trap the Ackié country; a younger brother of Aleck has the region about the mouth of Fox River—"my country," he later told us.

In spite of the vast extent of their hunting-grounds, the Indians frequently experience starving times. Moose and other meat can be dried so that it will keep indefinitely, and by hunting hard and laying up a big supply when conditions are favorable, it would not be very difficult for the Siwash to be always well supplied; but there is more of the grasshopper than of the ant in the Siwash make-up, and he suffers accordingly. Late November and December are usually the season of greatest want, as the snow is then soft and deep, rendering hunting difficult. When a crust forms, the hunters are able to move about more freely, while the game is greatly hampered and falls an easy prey.

The Indian has little idea of game conservation. By preference he slays cows and young animals, because their meat is more tender, nor is he likely to neglect an opportunity for wholesale and wasteful slaughter. The desire to kill is deeply implanted in his nature, and he bangs away at anything living so long as his ammunition holds out.



The traveller hears many stories of the starving times. On one occasion a party of Indians who were camped up the Ingenica, a stream that enters the Finlay from the west, a good distance above Fort Grahame, failed to kill game for a long time. They were already starving when a moose came strolling almost into camp, but the Indian who saw it was overeager and fired and missed. A boy was then sent to Fort Grahame, several days' journey distant, to beg a supply of food from the fort. When the boy arrived there Fox had food set before him, but stopped him when he thought he had eaten enough. Later Fox left the room, with the result that the boy fell to once more on pork and beans and ate so much that he was ill for two days and unable to travel. When he recovered he started back with others for the starving camp with a supply of food. He reached it in time to prevent any one from dying, but for twelve days the small children had been kept lying in bed with scarcely a morsel to eat.

On another occasion a party, including squaws and children, attempted to make their way through the Rockies to the post on Nelson River, far to the eastward. They were unable to kill game and reached such a state of starvation that the adults agreed that if by the end of the next day they had got nothing they would abandon the children (possibly this meant "eat them") and make their way out of the region as fast as possible. On the afternoon of the fateful day a hunter saw two moose, which escaped him and ran far up on the slope of a high mountain. There they or some other agency



started a snow-slide, which carried them back into the valley, where they fell an easy prey. Thus the children were saved.

In the days of the Klondike rush many would-be miners endeavored to reach the new El Dorado by ascending the Peace and the Finlay, but few ever got through. The sudden incursion of the white men into their country greatly wrought up the Indians of the region. One party of white men, headed by an old pioneer from Montana, attempted to get through with a pack-train from Half-Way River and, not far from Grahame, struck a hunting trail in which a couple of Indians had set some bear snares. The lead pack-horse, a mare of which the Montana man was very fond, ran into one of these snares and brought the log from above down upon her head with such force as almost to break her neck. The white men cut the snare and extricated her, but half a mile farther on she ran into another, with similar results. The Montana man then walked ahead of the outfit and cut the snares—five more of them—when he came to them, and the outfit got through to Grahame without further mishap. The Indians quickly discovered the destruction of their property and followed the pack-train to the fort, and a row became imminent.

“You must do something for the Indians,” Fox said to the white men.

“The white men meant you no harm,” he explained to the aggrieved aborigines. “They are ignorant people. Why, they did not even know what a bear-snare is! You must overlook what they did!”

A promise of new snares and presents of tea and tobacco made all serene once more.

More serious in its possibilities was a situation growing out of a white man's stealing a pony belonging to a Beaver Indian in the Fort St. John country down the Peace. The Beavers gathered together and pursued the thief and the party to which he belonged to Grahame, and not only reclaimed the animal but formed a league with the Grahame Indians to drive the white intruders out of the country. The situation was so tense that for a time the sword of tragedy hung by a hair. But Fox managed the affair with great shrewdness and there was no bloodshed.

The dislike which the Grahame Indians have for white men killing their game is doubtless the origin of a story that one hears at Finlay Forks to the effect that somewhere in the mountainous region about the head of the Ospica there is a "forbidden country" which white men are not permitted to enter. This region is said to be a veritable paradise for game, containing not only such common animals as bears, moose, sheep, and caribou, but large herds of elk. According to one version of the story, two white hunters were met at the edge of the forbidden tract by some Indians, who said:

"This is Indians' hunting-ground. White men cannot enter. There is the trail."

And the white men took the hint and turned back.

I did not believe this tale, but mention in it of elk led me to ask Fox whether these animals were to be found in the Fort Grahame country. He replied that years



before there had been elk in some places, but that now they had been exterminated. The last of which he had any knowledge was a lone bull that was killed about eight or ten years before in the Ackié country.

Sheep are not plentiful in any of the mountains that are readily accessible from the fort. There are sheep to the eastward, in the country around Laurier Pass, as Vreeland's party discovered in their 1912 trip. There are also a few sheep left in the range of mountains lying west of the Finlay below the fort. Some years ago E. A. Preble's party, which came into the Finlay country by pack-train from Telegraph Creek on the Stickine by way of the Ingenica River, heard of these sheep, and, in the interest of the American Biological Survey, offered a reward for the skin and head of one of them. But the reward was too small to be very tempting, and the Indians have not made much effort to win it, though two or three times they have seen the band. Whether these sheep are the ordinary bighorn, or Stone's sheep, I do not know; one guess is as good as another, and my guess would be Stone's sheep. As this band range country south of the parallel that runs through Laurier Pass, which at present is the southern limit where a specimen of Stone's sheep has been obtained and examined by scientists, it is possible that they may form a link between the northern and southern sheep. It is also barely possible that an examination of the Omineca or Wolverine Mountains, which lie directly west of Finlay Forks, may contain sheep that would be worthy of scientific study. Not much is known of these mountains. We



saw them at a distance, but all that I would venture to say is that some of their peaks are rugged enough for sheep.

For a period of three years not long ago Fox was not in the employ of the Company, and in his absence the Indians brought to the post the horns and a part of the skin of a ram. I saw these hanging in the storehouse but did not pay much attention to them. The head is a fairly big one, and I should judge from the skin that the animal was *Ovis stonei*, but where the ram was killed Fox did not know, nor was I able to learn. He has since written me that he has learned from the Indians that the ram was killed near the trail to Bear Lake, at a point about seven miles west of Grahame. I now regret that I did not examine the head more closely.

While at Fort Grahame on the way up we slept in our tents on the river-bank in front of the store. Fox himself had a tent pitched there, as he preferred sleeping in the open rather than in his cabin. Mosquitoes were much more troublesome at this place than any other we visited on the trip. Fox attributed this to the growth of grass in the clearing round the fort, but I believe there were other causes; the constant presence of human beings no doubt helps to attract them thither, while the great number of dead sloughs in the country round causes them to breed more plentifully than elsewhere. At any rate, they were both numerous and ferocious, and the thought that one might be bitten by a mosquito that had already fed from a tuberculosis or syphilis infected Siwash was not a pleasant one.

Any one who has travelled in the North Country must have been struck by the difference in method between the mosquitoes of that region and those of, say, Indiana or Ohio. In the latter country a mosquito often does a good deal of humming and reconnoitring before settling upon his intended victim, and the least movement is sufficient to make him take wing; in short, he is often as bashful and timid as an old maid contemplating making a proposal in leap-year. Not so these Northern mosquitoes. They indulge in no "hesitation waltzes." They know exactly what they want; they propose to get it without loss of time, and they swarm down upon a wretched human being like a pack of wolves on a broken-legged caribou.

Mosquitoes, "bulldogs," and black flies are the great pests of Canada in summer. I fully agree with Thompson Seton that, if it were not for them, this North Country during several months of the year would be "a human paradise."

Luckily, freezing nights had now come; the day of the mosquito was almost done. Though we were to have troubles and trials in plenty in the later stages of the trip, mosquitoes were not among them.

## CHAPTER IX

### DESERTER'S CANYON

ON the morning of the 21st of August we said good-bye to Fox and paddled off up-stream from Fort Grahame, the last point on Finlay River where civilized man has attempted to settle permanently. Henceforth, whatever might happen, we must depend entirely upon our own resources and resourcefulness, for there were no white men farther up the river. I cannot say how Lavoie felt about it, but for myself I rejoiced that we had passed beyond the "last outpost."

The day was cloudy, and there were frequent rains in the mountains, but only a few light drizzles fell in the valley. I rather like such days as this, when the landscape is blotted out at times and then the curtain rises on new panoramas, while the rain, the rainbows, and the clouds are added to the usual wonders of nature. The colors of rocks and foliage are much more vivid on such days than on clear, sunny days, when everything in the landscape tends toward a dull brown.

We were now leaving the high peaks opposite Fort Grahame behind us, but a fine, rugged range, bearing patches of snow, towered on the right-hand side of the valley, while straight ahead, in the far distance, appeared a strange white mountain, so thickly covered with rough excrescences that we nicknamed it "The Wart."



We found the river very swift and troublesome. Only two miles above the fort it dashed between two log-jams and formed a vast whirlpool in which we had no desire to be caught. However, by using the tracking rope in one place and by sneaking through eddies in another we got by safely and without much loss of time.

There were many traverses to be made that day in order to find pole bottom along the bars, and to avoid the dangerous set of the current toward log-jams. Some hours we made perhaps two miles per hour, others a mile, others a half, and in one or two we deemed ourselves lucky to make a quarter. It was a hard day for Joe, and it is not surprising that that night he talked loudly in his sleep about "*white brown bears*"! He seemed to have a most unpleasant time with those bears and piteously implored a former partner of his to shoot them!

I did not work quite so hard as did Joe, but, naturally, I worried more. The strain of working one's way day after day up a swift river in the wilderness is very wearing. It was not so much the danger that troubled me as the possibility of losing the canoe and outfit and being forced to turn back with the purpose of the trip unaccomplished.

We lunched next day on a bank opposite the mouth of the Ingenica, a considerable stream that empties into the Finlay, about twenty miles north of Fort Grahame. An Indian trail leads up this river toward Bear Lake, and there are said to be bars that will yield a fair return to the miner. My chief memory of the stream will

always be of a splendid grove of tall, slender, white-trunked poplars on the north bank.

Late that afternoon we reached a labyrinth of channels that furnished the most puzzling problem in the matter of navigation we had yet seen. We solved it finally by tracking up one channel, drifting down a second, tracking up a third, and finally "wading" the canoe out to a point above a riffle where we could embark and fight our way to quieter water.

Soaking wet and very weary, we camped that night in the "yard" of Shorty Webber's cabin on a slough six miles, by his reckoning, from Deserter's Canyon. At Finley Forks, Shorty had told us to make ourselves at home here, but a cabin that has not been inhabited for months except by mice and pack-rats is not the pleasantest place in the world, and we preferred to pitch our tents outside.

The cabin contained a light stove, worn-out moccasins, empty tins, old tump-lines and snow-shoes, and plenty of marten "stretchers." The little Dutchman is a good "rustler," and in the big cache outside there was, he had told us, the dried meat of two moose slain that spring. Most of his furniture was also in the cache.

We were delayed by rain next morning, but by one in the afternoon we camped for lunch on a rocky beach on the east side of the river, just above the mouth of a little mountain stream that came cascading down over big boulders and poured itself in a mass of foam into the river. There were traces of old Indian camps above us, and, as there is a pass through the mountain chain behind, I do not doubt that hunting-parties make this



their starting-point for trips into the region of the southern headwaters of the Ackié. In this way they avoid making the hard carry around Deserter's Canyon, which we rightly concluded was only a little above us.

As we had had plenty of caribou and bear meat, we had not attempted to do any fishing since leaving the Parsnip, but a more ideal spot for the sport could not be found in a dozen kingdoms, and I yielded at once to the temptation.

"Joe," said I, "you'll have to build the fire this time."

"All right," he grinned. "That's a great place for arctics sure."

I hastily set up my rod, selected a "black gnat," and cast into the white water. Instantly there was a swirl, a flash of a finny form, but we both scored a miss. A second cast proved more successful, and after a merry fight I held in my hands my first "arctic trout."

As the portrait opposite shows, these are shapely fish, with mother-of-pearl scales and an extraordinarily long back fin. In reality they are not trout at all, but grayling. However, they are splendid biters, being taken most readily with flies; hard, determined fighters; and at that season of the year their flesh was white and firm and delicious beyond compare. Possibly it was because of the romantic surroundings in which I fished for them, but it seemed that I enjoyed catching and eating these particular denizens of this cold Northern stream more than any other fish with which I have had any experience.





"A MORE IDEAL SPOT FOR THE SPORT COULD NOT BE FOUND IN A DOZEN KINGDOMS."



AN ARCTIC "TROUT"—THEY ARE A SHAPELY FISH WITH A LONG BLACK FIN.



Before lunch was ready I had caught eight in all, running, I should say, from three-quarters of a pound to a pound and a half. With this the supply seemed to be about exhausted, as after lunch I managed to land only one more. These fish, in fact, are rarely caught except at the mouths of rapid streams or in swift ripples, and it does not take long to "fish out" such a river as the Finlay. By the time that the Finlay valley contains a thousand settlers, arctic-trout fishing will probably be practically a thing of the past.

From the way the hills pinched in ahead, from the great rock masses in the river, and from the increasing height of the walls that hemmed the river in, we judged that the canyon could not be far distant, and so the event proved. First came a narrow passage with steep conglomerate cliffs on either side, but through this passage, though the current was swift, we were able to make our way with the canoe. Beyond, the walls spread out again, forming a considerable basin, at the upper end of which there was another yet narrower passage, where the real canyon begins. There were indications that at the time of the spring thaw the lower passage is sometimes choked with ice and trees, forming a jam that raises the water fully fifty feet in the basin.

On the west side, at the lower end of the canyon, there is a wide sand-bar, which forms a convenient place of approach to the portage. We landed there and began the work of transporting our stuff round the canyon to the navigable water above. Fortunately, there is a good Indian path, half a mile or a little more in length, that



leads around the canyon, but as we had much stuff and the way runs over a hill probably three hundred feet high, night drew near before we had all the loads across. Doubtless, it was dread of this portage and of dangers beyond that caused two of Finlay's canoemen to desert him—hence the name "Deserter's Canyon." We ate supper at the landing-place, and Joe spent the night there; but I took another load across and pitched my tent at the upper end of the portage, in order to make sure that no bear or other prowler should molest any of our precious belongings.

While resting from the work of portaging, I examined the lower and upper ends of the canyon and took several pictures. The river contracts to a width of perhaps a hundred feet, and the water rushes through with racing speed. The canyon walls are of hard conglomerate and sandstone, and through this the stream has cut its narrow gorge. The length of time required to cut the gorge through material of this sort cannot have been long, as time in geology goes, and, since this is the only point on the Finlay in a distance of almost two hundred miles in which the rocks have not been worn away below stream-level, it has been suggested that the channel is a comparatively recent one and that the ridge through which it makes its way owes its origin to a change of some sort during the glacial period.

However this may be, the canyon forms a complete barrier to navigation up-stream, but it has been run by skilled men in big canoes on the downward trip. The passage is, however, hazardous and not to be undertaken



THE ENTRANCE TO DESERTER'S CANYON.





lightly, as great boulders project from the bed of the stream, forming dangerous swells, eddies, and cross-currents.

A superb peak, which culminates in a pinnacle and bears patches of snow, towers more than a mile above the canyon on the eastern side and forms a landmark that, once seen and known, cannot be mistaken. Like hundreds of other mighty peaks in this great province, it is without a name.

The basin at the foot of the rapids seemed promising for fish, and I tried casting there soon after our arrival, but managed to catch nothing at first except a two-pound sapi. This result was a bit discouraging, as I had looked forward to this place as one where I might be able to land some really big fish.

Before supper Joe cleaned the arctics that I had caught earlier in the day, and threw the heads and other refuse in shallow water nor far from the canoe. When dusk was falling I happened to go down to the canoe after some article, when there was a sudden mighty splash, and a big fish went darting away from the refuse. Thinking he might return and being anxious to stock up our larder, I picked up the little .32 and stood watching. Out of the depths of the basin a big black form swam slowly and began to feed on the fish heads and guts. I fired, and the fish turned over on his back, exposing a wide expanse of silvery belly, at which I made a hasty grab. But when I was almost in reach the fish managed to turn over on his side, gave a mighty flop, and slid off into deep water.

Much chagrined, I took the rod again, and, casting with a big spoon baited with a piece of fish throat, soon had the satisfaction of hooking something the strength of which warned me that I must not be precipitate in making attempts to land. A royal battle ensued, lasting several minutes, but at the end man and not fish triumphed. It proved to be a magnificent sapi, which measured two feet three and one-half inches long. As we had no scales with us I could only guess at the weight, and my guess is that he would have weighed from seven to nine pounds.

As I had to hurry across the portage in order to pitch my tent while there was still light, I did not fish much longer. When I returned next morning and went to look at the fish, I found that it had been multiplied by two.

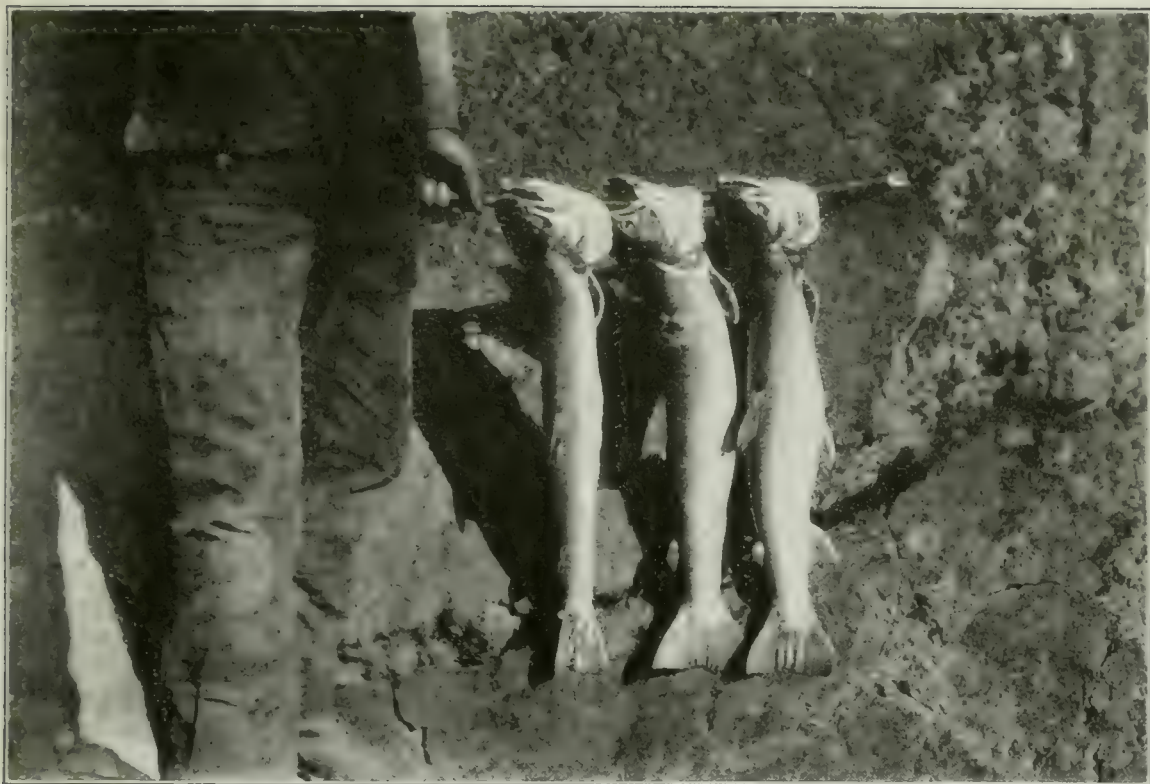
"Why, Joe, how's this?" I called to my helper, who was frying a sputtering pan of arctics.

"Oh, the twin of your fish came out and joined him," said Joe.

Encouraged by the sight, I once more tried casting, with the result that soon I had another big fellow securely hooked. The fight that followed was more lengthy than that of the preceding evening, and, even so, as Joe was pulling the fish out of the shallows the line broke, but the fish was badly exhausted, and by a quick grab Joe managed to save him.

This fish proved to be half an inch longer than the two others, but he was at least two pounds heavier, and, what was really remarkable, he was the same fellow at





THREE DOLLY VARDEN TROUT CAUGHT AT DESERTER'S CANYON.

Note wound in back of middle one.



A BEAR'S HANDIWORK.





which I had fired the previous evening, for in his back there was a gash three or four inches long made by the bullet. In spite of this wound, which was big enough to be noticeable in the picture I took of the three, he had eaten so large a quantity of fish heads and guts that he was positively aldermanic in proportions, yet still had been hungry enough to grab my spoon and had put up a harder fight than had either of his uninjured comrades.

To me the incident was conclusive proof, if proof had been needed, of the extraordinary voracity of these Dolly Varden trout.

By noon next day we had completed the portage, and had all our stuff, including the canoe, above the canyon. The labor involved had been hard, for I had done the greater part of the carrying, but the spot was so wildly charming and the fishing I had enjoyed was so exceptional, that I shall always regard the hours spent there as among the pleasantest in my life.

I can still hear in fancy the hoarse roar of the wild waters as my fire died down and I sank to sleep in my little tent at the head of the canyon.

## CHAPTER X

### TO THE MOUTH OF THE QUADACHA

ABOVE Deserter's Canyon the Finlay is very swift, and we found it necessary to track the canoe a long way up the river on the west side. After going some distance in this manner we came to a log-jam, against which the current set so ferociously that we dared not try to pass it, and consequently were forced to make a rather hazardous traverse through very rough water to the eastern shore. There was an immense gravel-bar on this side, with good pole bottom along it, and from thence there were no unusual difficulties.

Two noteworthy landmarks were now in sight: behind us towered the high peak that stands sentinel over the canyon, while ahead the white mountain-mass that we had named "The Wart" was constantly drawing nearer. The mountain-wall on the east side of the river-valley was broken some miles ahead, and we assumed that through this gap the Ackié made its way.

We hoped to be able to reach the mouth of the Ackié that afternoon, but the Finlay makes two immense bends to westward, just above the canyon, and it was not until noon next day that we did so. We found that this tributary empties by two branches through a wide gravel-bar, the largest of these branches being perhaps a hundred feet across and both of them very swift. A



small bush-fire was burning a little distance up the northern branch, and at first we imagined that the lazily ascending smoke came from a camp of Siwash engaged in drying meat. Opposite the mouth of the Ackié lies "The Wart," of which we had been catching glimpses ever since leaving Fort Grahame. It is composed of white limestone and is a part of a range of low mountains, strikingly different in appearance from the other ranges in the neighborhood. According to McConnell, this range "probably lies along a line of faulting running with the valley." The valley of the Ackié is several miles wide and extends straight back into the mountains for perhaps a dozen miles, where it is said by the Indians to fork, the main branch coming down from the north. Beyond the fork we could see a range of mountains higher and more rugged than those that lie along the valley, and seemingly very barren.

The Ackié has never been explored by any one who has left an authentic account of it, though there is a tradition that a couple of prospectors once ascended it for some distance. If they did so, theirs was a wild-goose chase, for the gravel in the bed of the river is largely limestone and does not contain a trace of gold.

When planning the trip, I had contemplated the possibility of entering the Rockies by way of the Ackié, and had tried hard to gather information regarding this stream and the region it drains, though without much success. Shorty Webber at the Forks had told us of an overland trip that he had once made to some of its southern headwaters; he had drawn a rough map of the

country for us, but he confessed that he had not travelled far along the river, and his information was pretty vague, though he insisted that we would "find mountains you will not climb." On this trip he shot both goats and caribou and became deathly sick from eating goat meat.

Aleck had told us at Grahame that at the head of the river we would find "plenty goats, plenty sheep," also walls of ice "fifty feet high." He stated that the headwaters are "a hundred miles" from the mouth, but as the ideas of these Grahame Indians both as to distances and numbers is very vague, we were inclined to discount his figures. Otherwise I imagine that his description will be found to be true, and that goats, sheep, and glaciers will be found on the headwaters of this river. The river must head somewhere in the neighborhood of the "Great Snow Mountain" seen from the Laurier Pass country by the Vreeland party in 1912.

I had hoped that Fox would be able to tell us something definite about the region, but discovered that he could not do so. Like many another trader in charge of fur posts, he has been content to come and go along the beaten track and to venture very little out of it, and his knowledge of the Ackié was based almost wholly on what old Chief Pierre had told him about it. According to Pierre, it is a most wonderful country. In it there are spots where the water is boiling hot, and once, when travelling at night, he saw in the face of a mountain opposite a great, bright eye, fully a foot across, which stared down at him and made him afraid.



If I had felt certain that we could find this remarkable "eye"—which Joe and Fox thought might have been a diamond—I would certainly have ascended the valley of the Ackié, but I was a bit doubtful as to our ability to locate it, and, as we were making good progress and still had a good part of the season before us, I decided while we were eating lunch on a gravel-bar at the mouth of the Ackié to pass this stream by and not to strike into the mountains until we had reached the mouth of the Quadacha. I reasoned that by so doing we would be able to enter the unexplored range almost at its centre, and it seemed probable that from some peak in that region we would be able to overlook the whole country from the region of Laurier Pass to that of the Liard River.

The next few days were days of hard and grinding labor. There was much tracking and wading, and the journey was a constant criss-cross from one side of the river to the other in search of pole bottom, while we won past the long reaches and the big mountains with discouraging slowness. Each night when we made camp we were invariably both wet and weary.

The river as far as Paul's Branch was as crooked as a coiled serpent, winding from one side of the valley to the other. We passed many high cut banks of gravel or clay. Some of these banks were honeycombed with the holes of bank-swallows, like the cliffs along the Parsnip, and on a few we saw great clusters of the hanging mud nests of the cliff-swallow (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*, Say).



Above Deserter's Canyon for many miles we saw little game sign, and at no point from thence northward did we see many bear tracks. On the third day beyond the canyon, moose tracks became very plentiful, though most were several weeks old, the animals evidently being up among the mountains. Twice, also, I saw fresh goat tracks in the sand right at the edge of the river. The animals had evidently come down from a very rugged, barren range of mountains on the west side of the river. From observations in the course of this trip I am convinced that these odd animals range a great deal more through the woods at low altitudes than is generally supposed.

Old Indian camps were very abundant, as were also cabalistic signs. In one place I found a blazed tree upon which some aboriginal artist had drawn a moose with his best skill, but whether he did this merely to exercise his artistic talent or as a message to friends, I am unable to say. From the number of old camps that one meets along this river one might easily be led to conclude that the Indian population is much larger than it is. Before making any deductions from such data one should bear in mind that in the Far North the evidences of such camps remain for many years, and that one family travelling up and down the river in a year makes a great many camps. If one cares for cleanliness, he will carefully shun all recent Indian camp-grounds.

There are some tracts of level fertile land in this section of the valley, also some fair timber, though much of the valley has been burned over, some parts of it

recently, others two or three decades ago. We saw several small fires. All of them were travelling very slowly, and some of them had evidently been burning for a year or more. On one range of mountains on the east side of the valley a fire had recently run high on the mountainsides, and the brown patches that had been burned over contrasted strongly with the fresh green of the forest that was still untouched. The Indians are supposed to have purposely set many of the fires in the hope of getting the country into grass.

From various signs we were able to recognize one camp as having been that of a French Canadian named Hunter, who the year before had married a young Siwash widow named Annie. We saw the pair later on our way down the river, not far above the mouth of the Omineca. She is a husky, buxom young woman, not unattractive for a *klooch*, but she bore the reputation of being a great gadabout. The previous winter she and her twelve-year-old brother had made the trip from this camp to Grahame, fully eighty miles, on snow-shoes, in order to participate in the Christmas festivities at the fort. On their way back they ran into a blizzard and stopped for the night at Shorty Webber's cabin below the canyon. Shorty would not permit them to proceed in such weather unaccompanied, and next morning set out to break trail for them. As Annie represented that she had plenty of grub for all, he took no provisions with him, only to discover that she had nothing but cornmeal. Mush proved a thin diet on which to travel so far through deep snow in midwinter, and after three



days of strenuous going, when they were still several miles from Hunter's camp, Shorty found himself exhausted.

"You have mushed me all this trip, Annie," he said to the *klooch*, "and I am worn out. Now you must *mush* [prospector for travel or move along] and break trail."

She did so with energy, and at last they managed, half frozen, to drag themselves into camp and safety.

I decapitated a "fool hen" at Hunter's deserted camp, but we saw no large game on this stretch of the river. Not far above the camp, at the top of a ridge on the east side of the river, we saw an Indian scaffolding, and I have no doubt that the Indians leave the river here to hunt for moose in the valleys to eastward. We tried fishing at the mouth of Paul's Branch but without success. This stream enters the Finlay from the east. It is about thirty feet wide and very swift, and it drains a long valley lying beyond the range that bounds the Finlay Valley on the east.

For a dozen miles above Paul's Branch the Finlay follows an almost straight course on the east side of the valley, closely skirting the foot of a long mountain ridge. As we travelled northward the elevation increased on both sides, and the range on the west became one of the most forbidding we had yet seen.

Late one afternoon we reached a point on the river where the west side of the stream was clearer than we had yet seen it, while near the eastern bank the water was almost milky white. For several miles this strange





QUADACHA JUST ABOVE THE MOUTH.



QUADACHA ABOVE THE FORKS.



contrast became more and more accentuated, and we knew that the goal we were seeking could not be far distant. A little before sunset we camped in an open grove of spruce on the west bank, in sight of the mouth of the Quadacha or Whitewater. This was the thirteenth day since our leaving the Forks and the twenty-fourth from Prince George. It also happened to be my birthday.

I went to sleep that night feeling well pleased over our progress. Thanks to good luck and Joe's skill as a river-man, we had completed our outward canoe journey in a shorter time than I had dared to hope.

We had reached the edge of the Known. Before us lay the strenuous work of penetrating the mountains in "back of beyond."



## CHAPTER XI

### WHAT MAKES THE QUADACHA WHITE

TAKE a gallon of water and pour into it a quart of milk, and you will have a fluid closely resembling the flood that the Quadacha in summer empties into the Finlay. Above the junction the Finlay is as clear as any stream I ever saw, but below, after the two streams commingle, one can see into it only a few inches. At the end of August the relative volume of water in the two rivers appeared to be about as two is to one.

I had read or heard two theories propounded to account for the color of the Quadacha. McConnell inferred from the appearance of the water and from information derived from the Indians that the stream's color is due to sediment from glaciers, and he states in a letter to me that he actually saw a glacier, or thinks he saw one, from the top of Prairie Mountain far to westward. Subsequently we, too, climbed Prairie Mountain and saw this glacier, but we already knew that it had very little, if anything, to do with making the Quadacha white. From a trapper or two Joe had heard that the color was caused by the stream washing against "white cut banks." The moment I examined the water I decided that this latter theory was most unlikely, but Joe, with a backwoodsman's usual prejudices against "sci-

entific fellows," persisted in declaring that undoubtedly the trappers were right.

We thought it possible that we could work our way some distance up the Quadacha with the canoe, but before attempting it we made a short reconnaissance along its banks. We found the current very swift and noticed many sweepers and log-jams.

"Well, what do you think of it?" I said to Joe, after going half a mile or so.

"We might make it," he said doubtfully, "but it would be hard work, and we'd be nearly sure to have a spill or bust the canoe on a sunken log. Why, you can't see an inch in this water!"

"We'll not try it," I said decidedly. "We can't afford to lose the canoe and all our stuff away up here. We'll make a cache and strike out overland with pack-sacks."

The selection of a place for the cache was a matter of no small importance. Not only were wild animals, such as bears, wolverenes, and pack-rats, to be feared; but we were a bit uneasy lest human beings might molest our belongings. A year or so before a man of most unsavory reputation named "Society Red" had disappeared in the Finlay region, and though it was commonly supposed that by this time he was probably dead of the syphilis with which he was infected, some one had robbed Indian caches the preceding spring. The same thief—whether "Society Red," a murderer who had fled into the region some years before, or some other person—might stumble upon our belongings and walk off with

them. Or the Indians, exasperated by their losses and always inclined to look askance at white intruders, might take it into their heads to get even with Caucasians generally by retaliating on us; Fox at Grahame had, in fact, suggested such a possibility by way of warning. To return worn out and destitute of food to a rifled cache and to find the canoe stolen or destroyed was in that remote region not a prospect to look forward to with equanimity.

In examining the Quadacha to ascertain whether or not it was navigable we had noticed a few hundred yards up a small wooded island, and I determined that there we would make our cache. I considered that the likelihood of its being discovered there by human beings was exceedingly remote, while it would also be in less danger from wild animals. By making a portage round some bad water near the mouth, and by cutting out some dangerous logs, we managed in a comparatively short time to work the canoe up to the island. We made a landing on the side washed by the smaller channel, and spent much of the remainder of the day caching our stuff.

As we would be forced to carry our whole outfit for the trip upon our backs, we tried to make it as light as possible. We took my balloon-silk tent, weighing about four and a half pounds, a light blanket apiece, some big blanket-pins, and a piece of canvas about seven by eight feet. Perforce I carried my big rifle and camera, and Joe also had a little camera. There existed no real necessity for his taking his rifle, but he was obsessed



with the idea that we might get into a mix-up with a grizzly and insisted on doing so. Of food we had a supply for about eight days, but carried along extra salt and tea, in the hope that we would be able to eke out what we had with game. The grub supply included two dozen bars of milk chocolate and a number of cans of dehydrated stuff of one sort and another. Our cooking outfit consisted of a small frying-pan and three empty tins of varying sizes. We made detachable wire bails, and, of course, the tins would nest. Each of us carried field-glasses and a compass. Also we took a hatchet.

Joe had with him his old pack-sack, properly equipped, and I devoted a couple of hours to fastening to my dunnage bag a tump-line and shoulder-straps, using some stout canvas and some leather straps I had brought for the purpose. The camera made my load pretty bulky and added weight that I wished could have been food, but, of course, the camera could not be left behind, as it was almost as essential as my rifle.

As Joe was an old packer, we agreed that it was reasonable that he should take more weight than I did; for, though I was becoming reasonably hardened by this time, I had done little packing and knew that the unusual character of the work would prove very trying and exhausting. Joe took about sixty pounds, including his rifle, and I about fifty; but, of course, he thought his pack far heavier than mine; this not by way of complaint, but merely to emphasize his transcendent abilities, upon which he was inclined to expatiate whenever

opportunity offered. However, by the end of the trip I was carrying fully as big a load as was he.

After a careful study of the lay of the country we decided that it would be better not to attempt to follow the valley of the Quadacha, as this would necessitate a long detour, but to climb the range lying immediately to the east of us. By so doing we would not only be able to make a short cut but could probably from the top lay out a good route into the country we wished to penetrate.

A short walk through thick spruce brought us next morning to the mountain's base; thenceforward it was a continual climb up a tolerably steep slope. The day was clear and warm, and though we paused every few minutes to rest, we were soon soaking with perspiration. As I had expected, my pack distressed me greatly, but gradually we worked our way up through the spruce woods that mantled the base of the mountain, through a belt of jack-pine, and into the fragrant balsam that, in these mountains, usually occurs just below timber-line. An unfortunate feature of the climb was that the slope was destitute of water; our thirst soon grew very great, but we nibbled at our chocolate, ate a dry lunch and some high-bush cranberries, and finally, well-nigh exhausted, at about two o'clock in the afternoon reached the bare, rocky summit.

Behind and far beneath us, a mere blue thread, flowed the Finlay, visible, in spite of the haze from bush-fires, for a great distance both up and down stream. Exactly at the junction with the Quadacha it bent almost straight to westward, issuing from a narrow cleft



in a range that bounds the great intermontane valley on the west. About three miles above the mouth of the Quadacha we could discern another and smaller stream, which we knew to be the Tochieca or Fox. The Fox takes the place of the Finlay in the great valley, and its sources are far to the northward in the region of Sifton Pass, beyond which the country is drained by the Liard. For several miles the Quadacha occupies the east side of the valley, skirting the high mountain ridge on which we stood, and then issues from a pass that leads northeastward toward the heart of the Rockies.

Mountains lay all about us. Beyond the Finlay rose an endless sea of peaks and ranges, while to the west of the Fox there ran a bold ridge that appeared to be fairly continuous on top and which, comparatively low at the southern end where the Finlay broke through, gradually increased in elevation toward the northwest until it culminated in some exceedingly rugged peaks, bearing patches of perpetual snow. We were to become more intimately acquainted with this range later.

To eastward a distinct disappointment greeted us. We had hoped that, once on the top of the range, we would find a plateau or at least a ridge connecting us with the mountains beyond, but this proved not to be the case. The mountain on which we stood formed part of a range running parallel to the Finlay from the region of Paul's Branch and ending at the point where the Quadacha issued from the mountains. It was separated from the higher mountains to the eastward by a wide, deep valley containing numerous small lakes.



On our way up many red squirrels had ceased their labor of caching cones long enough to chatter excited protests against our invasion of their domain, while several squawking whiskey-jacks had fluttered hopefully about, but of game we had seen nothing, though there were signs here and there of grouse and many old tracks and droppings of moose. We had hoped to find on the summit tracks of either caribou or goats or, better still, the animals themselves, but we saw no signs of either. Furthermore, the mountains beyond the valley did not look promising, since their summits appeared to be either barren rock or else covered with a thick growth of scrubby bushes. Of grassy slopes, such as game loves to feed upon, there was a discouraging absence. Much of the country in the valleys and on the lower slopes appeared to have been swept years before by fire, and a dreary tangle of miles upon miles of fallen timber and thick bushes was visible.

Our immediate necessity was water. The summer had been exceedingly dry, and as our mountain was not quite high enough to bear perpetual snow, its top was as dry as a bone. The labor of reaching the summit had been hard, and the fatigue resulting from the climb, joined with our raging thirst, made us weak and miserable.

In the hope of finding water we made our way for a considerable distance northeastward along the range, but had ultimately to descend nearly a thousand feet into a draw on the western side of the ridge. There we discovered a deliciously cold rill and camped for the

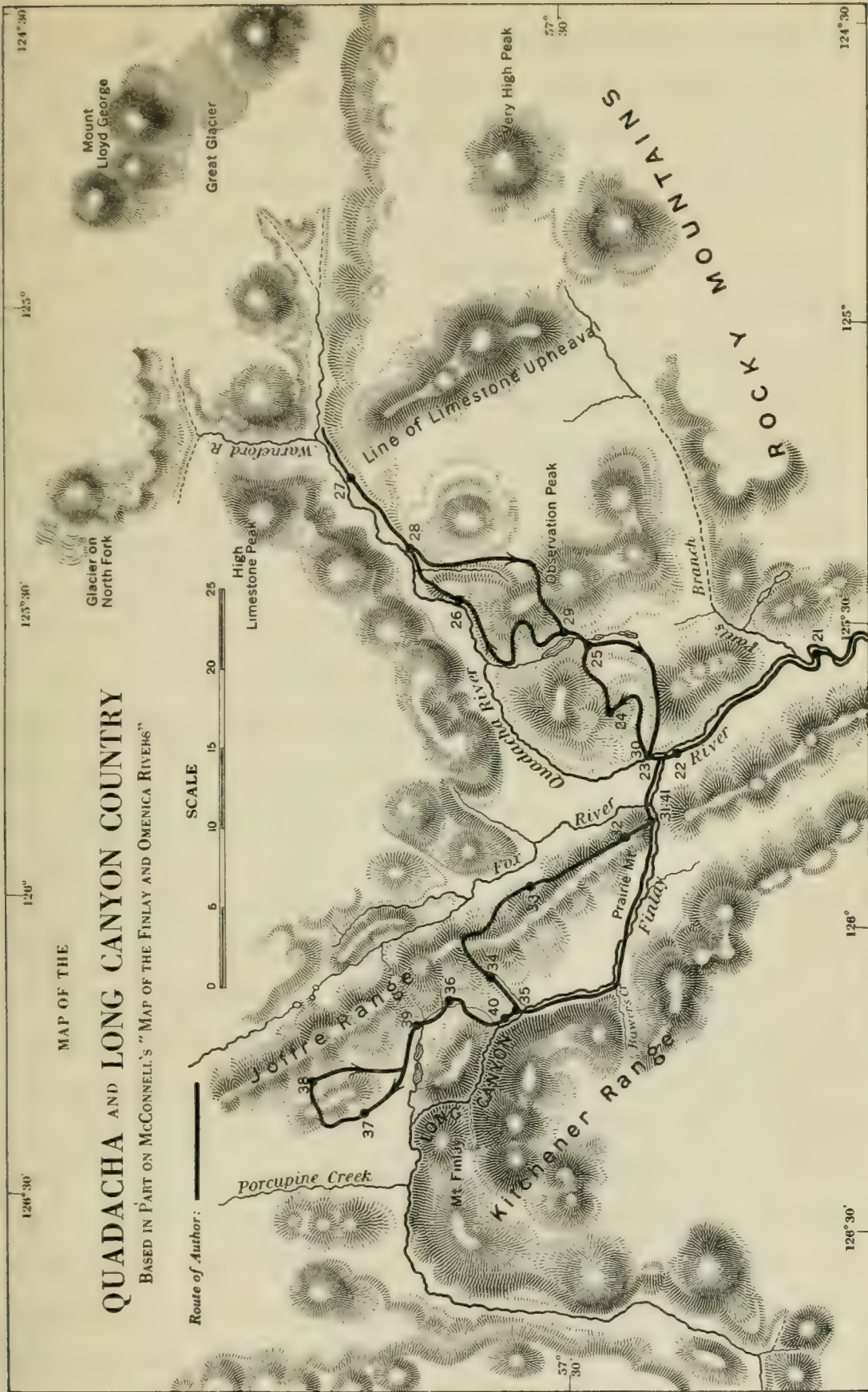
MAP OF THE

# QUADACHA AND LONG CANYON COUNTRY

BASED IN PART ON McCONNELL'S "MAP OF THE FINLAY AND OMENICA RIVERS"

Route of Author:

SCALE







night in a grove of balsam, whose fragrant boughs made delightful beds. In places the draw was thickly covered with willows, through which deep moose trails meandered, but though I watched for some time around the head of the draw, I saw nothing.

As it was certain that the night would be freezing cold, we made preparations accordingly, and as these preparations were typical of our procedure every night we were in the mountains, I shall describe them. While there was yet light we cut and dragged up plenty of logs, some of them green; at this and many subsequent camps there were some dead logs ready to hand, so that the task was not so strenuous as might appear. We pitched our little tent close to the camp-fire, and so placed it that the heat would enter the open front, which, of course, was always turned away from the wind. With big pins I had brought for the purpose we transformed our light blankets into sleeping-bags. Making ready to retire consisted of little more than pulling off our boots and putting on all our extra garments, including extra socks; for we rather *dressed* than *undressed* for bed. Our final task was to replenish the fire, and to this we gave our best skill, being careful as to how we laid the logs. As our feet were toward the fire, and the heat was reflected downward by the tent roof, we were always quite comfortable so long as the fire was burning. As a rule, Joe smoked a final pipe in bed, and we would lie and talk about the incidents of the day, our plans for the morrow, or of our experiences in the past in various corners of the world. As a rule, such talks did not last

long, for sleep comes quickly to men who have toiled all day up and down mountains with packs on their backs. Hours would pass and the fire would burn low, while the chill air would strike through our thin blankets. It is impossible to sleep well when one is cold, and ultimately one or the other of us would become so uncomfortable that he would rise and throw on more logs. On cold nights this process would be repeated several times. In the main, we were able to keep ourselves reasonably comfortable, in spite of our shortage of bedding. Such is the advantage of the open tent. Our tent was a small one for two men, but we managed to find room in it not only for ourselves but also for our rifles, cameras, and food. As a rule, Joe used the sack of flour for a pillow!

The morning after our first night on the mountains we climbed back through a splendid grove of balsam to the top of the range, and, travelling along the top, came presently to a point whence we could see a part of the upper Quadacha and some fine peaks toward its headwaters. Beyond the valley rose an immense mountain, many miles in length, whose lower slopes had been swept almost everywhere by old forest-fires, while the summit was a mass of barren rock. The slopes of this mountain and of the eastern side of the one on which we stood were thickly overgrown with willows and other bushes. In the valley itself a few small clumps of spruce survived, and there was what appeared to be a tract of open meadow, at one end of which gleamed a tiny lakelet.

We took off our packs and for some time stood gaz-



ing down into the valley at a spectacle that was not precisely beautiful, yet possessed a wild sort of charm. Although the distance to the lake seemed short, it could hardly have been less than two miles. The thought occurred to me that the place was well-nigh ideal for a moose to drink at and wade about in, and I began to scan the water near the shores. Almost immediately, in a little bay on the hither side, a tiny speck that seemed to be moving caught my attention. The distance was so great that the speck literally appeared no bigger than a fly, yet there was something about it that made me feel certain that it was a moose. I hesitated to announce the fact, however, for on the previous day Joe had called my attention to an object in the Finlay far beneath us, and had declared most positively that it was a bull moose wading in the river, whereas an inspection through our glasses showed that it was nothing but a stationary log with projecting branches that we had mistaken for antlers. In the present case, therefore, I got out my glasses and took a long and careful look, after which I remarked casually:

“Do you see the moose down in the lake?”

Of course Joe was sceptical, but after I had pointed the animal out to him—it was a long time before he saw it, for it looked infinitesimal to the naked eye—and he had inspected it through his glasses, he was obliged to admit that I was right. Even through our glasses the beast looked so small that we could not make out whether it was a bull or a cow.

“If it has a good head and I can get close, I shall



try to shoot it," said I, "but it is ten to one that it will turn out to be a cow or a bull with small antlers, or else they will still be in velvet."

It was improbable that the animal would remain much longer in the lake, for it was already ten o'clock. The slope directly beneath us was too steep in most places to descend, while in others it was so thickly covered with brush and scrubby timber that we knew we would quickly lose sight of the moose if we attempted to make the descent. For a good while, therefore, we sat up on the summit of the mountain observing the animal's motions in the hope of determining where it meant to lay up for the day. It was well worth having come so far just to sit there and watch that big wild beast go about its affairs undisturbed and undismayed, and the picture is one that will always remain in memory. The moose seemed to be in no particular hurry, but after wading aimlessly about for a long time, finally set off leisurely southward along the shore, sometimes on the beach, at others in the water. This was not good for us, for the animal was travelling right up-wind, which made it impracticable to waylay it and wait for it to pass. Two or three times we lost sight of it entirely behind banks or clumps of trees, but finally it emerged at one end of the lake and made its way through the marsh beyond, pausing now and then to browse on clumps of willows. As it was now nearing a clump of green timber, where it would be lost to view, we decided to begin the descent. Much of the way down lay through thickets of scrub willow and other low

bushes, which greatly impeded our progress. At one place we came to an opening thickly covered with huckleberry-bushes, bearing a great profusion of the largest berries of this sort I remember to have seen anywhere, and we stopped a bit here to rest and eat our fill. As these berries showed no signs of having been disturbed, we concluded that there were few bears in the region. When we finally reached the valley, we were in little better case than on top of the mountain, for not only could we not see the moose, but the seemingly beautiful "meadow" turned out to be a muskeg, overgrown in spots with low bushes, through which we could make our way about as quietly as a herd of cattle running through a brush pile. In short, the stalk was a complete failure.

One fact was deeply impressed upon us by that morning's walk, namely, that though we lost sight of this particular moose, the country appeared to be as thick with them as are fleas in Italy. The mountainside and the valley were literally ploughed up with their tracks and trails. In the soft, marshy valley the trails crisscrossed hither and yon and in places were fully a foot deep and a couple of feet wide; in fact, I have never seen in the States a pasture so torn up by the feet of domestic cattle as were this valley and mountainside by moose. There were tracks of big moose and little moose and middle-sized moose, of moose with small feet, broad feet, and long, narrow feet. One set of tracks had evidently been made by "Old Splayfoot," for the cleft in the centre of each track was at least two inches wide.



As a rule, a moose's hoof, unlike that of a caribou, does not spread much, and the cleft is narrow.

We decided to spend the rest of the day in the valley and watch the lake for moose. I favored crossing the valley to the farther side and camping in a clump of spruce, where we would be out of sight of the mountain-sides around, but Joe made so many objections that ultimately I allowed him to pitch our camp beside the creek and right across the main moose trail that led up and down the valley. Here we had lunch, after which I made my way south up the valley a mile or more to a beaver pond that we had noticed on the way down the mountain. I watched this place until about three o'clock without seeing anything, but on my way back to camp I disturbed a moose that had been wading about in the creek, in the shelter of some willows. The animal made off at a run through the brush, springing with astonishing agility over fallen trees. It was not over a hundred yards away, and I could have taken a running shot at it, but I saw at once that it was a cow, so let her go unmolested. If I had had the same opportunity a few days later, I fear she would not have got off so easily—British Columbia game-laws to the contrary, notwithstanding.

After a short stay at camp I walked down the valley to the main lake, a mile away, and hid myself in a clump of spruce close to the nearer end. From the mountain-top this body of water had appeared no larger than a small pond, but I found it to be fully a mile long and probably five hundred yards wide at the widest place.



For the most part it was shallow, but there were some big holes that were deep. Both then and later I tried to discover whether it contained fish of any sort, but I was never able to see any either in it or in the brook. As the outlet, which we saw later, tumbles down a thousand feet or more in the course of about a mile, I doubt whether fish have ever been able to make their way up it. The rotting poles of an old camp in a clump of spruce made it evident that the spot was known to the Indians, while the presence of bleached bones and of coarse hair showed that the aboriginal hunters had not watched in vain. From the axe marks on the camp-poles I judged that the place had not been visited for three or four years.

Although I watched until the light was too poor for me to see the sights on my rifle, my vigilance was unrewarded. On my return to camp I found that Joe had been up the valley to beyond the beaver pond, and had found another lake. He had heard a moose making off through the brush but had not seen it.

Next morning we made a very early start and watched beside the lower lake until after nine o'clock but saw nothing. Considering the abundance of "sign," this failure may appear astonishing to some readers, but not to those who know moose. A hunter cannot pitch his tent across their main trail and build a fire that is visible for miles from the mountainsides and expect to kill many moose. Joe had several times admitted that he was "not a moose hunter," and I never disputed the assertion after seeing where he insisted on pitching our camp. During

a month or two in the fall a bull moose is a fool and is likely to disregard anything and everything, but the "running season" had not yet come. However, even if we had been as careful as possible, the result might have been the same. To a large extent moose are nocturnal animals, and as there were a hundred places where these could water, it was not surprising that we had not seen more of them.

If we had really been anxious to kill a moose at this time, I would have remained in this valley until we got one, but the strong probability was that any bull we might see would have antlers still in velvet, while we were not yet far enough on our journey for the meat to be of much assistance to us. I determined, therefore, to move on and make a stop in the valley on the way back, thinking that by that time the antlers would probably be clear and hard. In a tree at this lake we left a small cache consisting of a clean undershirt, in the arms of which we tied a few cupfuls of flour and rice, with a piece of canvas surrounding the whole.

Joe favored ascending the immense barren mountain to the east of us and making our way over the summit, but my legs were still stiff and sore from the ascent of the range behind us, and believing that we would be compelled to descend on the other side, I was anxious, if possible, to go round the obstacle instead of over it. We were now not far from the point where the mountain broke away to give place for the valley of the Quadacha, and from what I had seen of the country from the top of the peak behind us, I believed that it would



be possible for us to make our way round the shoulder of the mountain and thus to avoid the climb.

None too graciously, for he felt that he was right, Joe assented to this plan, and shouldering our packs once more, we made our way along the lake through muskeg and impeded frequently by fallen trees to the farther end and then, turning off to the right, struck northeastward. Along the lake shore we noticed the track of a black bear, the only one we had seen for several days. For two or three miles the going was not bad, but ultimately, on the mountainside, we got into a patch of burned timber and began to experience trouble. It was this burn that had caused Joe to oppose our taking this route, and he had quoted the old saying of the country: "Where there is a burn and you cannot see the timber standing, it must be down." I, too, had seen the burn, but had hoped it would not be so bad but that we could make our way through it, and in view of the weakness of my legs, I preferred tackling it to climbing the mountain. For a couple of hours we persevered, but with each rod of progress the going grew worse, and it became painfully apparent that Joe's apprehensions were well founded. In all my experience with down timber, both in eastern and western Canada, I have never seen such a tangle as this was. The trees, in places spruce, in others jack-pine, had originally stood very thick. The fire had left the dead blasted trunks standing like skeletons; ultimately these had rotted at the butt and had been swept down by the wind in inextricable confusion. The trunks formed a network so



deep that it was impossible in most places to walk otherwise than upon them, and we were rarely able to get our feet on the ground.

To walk thus elevated in the air—often eight or ten feet—with heavy packs on our backs, over this tangle of fallen trees was not a pleasant task. Had all the trunks been sound, the danger of a fall would still have been great; it was much increased by the fact that many were rotten enough to break under our weight. We were as careful as we could be, yet several times each of us had slips that might easily have been serious.

The possibility of a broken leg or even of a disabling sprain in that wild region, two days' journey from our canoe and cache, a hundred and fifty miles from the nearest point at which we could be certain of finding other human beings, and more than five hundred from a surgeon, was not to be contemplated lightly. At the best, an injury to either of us meant giving up the objects of my long journey and devoting all our time and efforts to getting back to civilization and safety. Surely these forests have ways of avenging themselves on man for his setting the fires that lay them waste!

For a long time we kept fighting our way onward, hoping that we should reach the end of the tangle, but the farther we went the worse it got. Whenever we came to a particularly bad stretch I could hear Joe muttering to himself, and guessed that he was cussing me for getting us into such a mess. Finally, I said:

"Joe, you certainly were right in thinking that we ought to avoid this. I would rather take all the dan-

gers of hunting grizzlies for months than climb over these infernal jack-pines for half a day. Let's try another route."

"I think we shall have to go down," said he.

So we turned down toward the valley of the Quadacha. Getting out of the tangle proved no easy task, but, after lunching in a clump of green spruce beside the tumbling creek that gives outlet to the lake, we managed to make our way at last to fairly good going once more, and camped that night on the bank of the Quadacha at a point probably twenty miles above our cache.

The course of the Quadacha from this point is roughly from northeast to southwest, and it is still the same muddy, racing stream. Opposite the camp there rose a range of fine large peaks whose upper slopes ran well above timber-line. Through my glasses I examined the summit of the nearest mountain long and carefully for game, but saw no trace of any; it was, in fact, the same old story of either rocky barrens or stunted bushes, with a complete absence of grass. Doubtless, moose frequented those mountainsides, possibly an occasional bear, but I think nothing else.

The next day was one of grinding labor through thick spruce, brûlée, willow, and alder thickets, across dead sloughs, through treacherous muskegs, over hills against which the river swept, forming cut banks around which we must climb. Ever since we had left the Finlay, Joe had grown glummer and glummer and made no secret of the fact that he did not enjoy this sort of work. No longer, as of old, did his voice ring out in mellifluous

strains in praise of "Molly MacIntyre" or "Molly Malone."

"This is one hell of a country!" he declared sullenly as we were resting after a particularly trying fight with a muskeg. "No chance to kill game here. If you do shoot a head, I won't help to carry it out. What you want to go into such country for?"

I once more explained my desire to penetrate into the mountains and to see the glacier that gave the Quadacha its color.

"It's no glacier," he declared. "White cut banks. People in your country, do they talk a great deal about what makes the Quadacha white?"

"Not one in ten million ever heard of the Quadacha," I said, laughing at his perplexity.

Some of the muskegs bore a thick carpet of soft sphagnum moss, and in one of them we found low-bush cranberries. In many places we met with a great profusion of the shrub that goes by the name of "Labrador tea"—a shrub that figures in several accounts of arctic and subarctic exploration. We had seen much of this shrub before, but this was the first time we had noticed the low-bush cranberry. The high-bush cranberry had been a constant companion ever since we left Finlay Forks, and I had often picked and eaten its acid, red berries, a few of which are rather pleasant and refreshing.

Toward noon, on an island in the river, I decapitated a young willow grouse, and this day we also saw a snowshoe rabbit. The animal dashed quickly into a thicket, but I saw enough of him to ascertain that he was still



wearing his summer coat. One of the astonishing things about this North Country is how few rabbits (varying here is, of course, their proper name) one sees in summer. In the woods along the Finlay and almost everywhere we went we saw a profusion of their trails, cuttings, and droppings, and in poplar thickets we noticed hundreds of saplings that have been girded in winter—often four or five feet up, showing the approximate depth of the snow—yet one actually sees very few of the animals themselves.

Our camp that night was again on the river-bank, and opposite us there still towered up some fine mountains. Ahead we beheld a particularly rugged peak of white limestone, a formation entirely different from those of the ranges nearer the Finlay.

A large spruce-tree close to our camp-fire bore striking evidence of having that spring received some rough attentions from a bear. The bark on one side of the butt and on an exposed root had been ripped loose, and the wood beneath bore the scratches of the powerful claws. The bear may have done this merely in playful mood or to smooth off his claws, as cats sometimes scratch boards or saplings, but I think he did it in order to start a flow of spruce sap, on which these animals sometimes feed. In the course of the trip we saw scores of other trees that had been so treated by bears, while it was not uncommon to see thickets of spruce and jack-pines in which dozens of saplings had been peeled by porcupines.

On a slough just below this camp beavers had been

active, as indeed they had been in many places along the Quadacha. Most of these animals along this stream are "bank beavers"; by which is meant that they do not build dams but make their quarters in holes along the banks of the streams. Not twenty yards below our camp, right out on the bank, there was a pile of twigs, poles, and dirt that resembled a beaver hutch, and its presence in such a place caused me to examine it. By tearing away the top of the structure, I reached, at about the level of the ground, a large cavity, which was connected with a hole that opened below water-level in the river-bank. I am unable to say certainly why the beaver had built such an unusual structure, but I suggest that possibly fear of high water had rendered it desirable for him to dig upward so far that he had made an opening that exposed him to danger from coyotes and other enemies; therefore, he proceeded to close it by piling up the structure that had attracted my attention. On the other hand, he may simply have miscalculated and dug too far up. At any rate, he had most effectually stopped up the hole.

All observers of the beaver whose writings I have read unite in praising that animal's remarkable intelligence or highly developed instinct—as you will. The most exhaustive book I know about beaver is that by Morgan, who about sixty years ago made a careful study of the flat-tails on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan—a region in which I myself have watched the animals—and took some photographs of dams and hutches by the old "wet-plate" process. Morgan tells of beaver colo-

nies that even built canals in order to be able to float to their houses supplies of wood and bark for winter use. That they actually did this and many other wonderful things I have not the slightest doubt, for the beaver is a very clever animal.

The point I want to get at is this: the people who write and talk about the beaver are so enthusiastic in his praise that I recall only a few statements which would lead one to doubt that this animal is not all-wise and past master in the sphere of the activities he undertakes. Yet he is not so by any means, and within a hundred yards of our camp there on the Quadacha there existed two striking and conclusive concrete proofs of his limitations.

Some of the poplars that the beavers had been cutting on the bank of the slough below us were large, a few being over a foot in diameter. Naturally the animals desired that these trees should fall into the river, for if they did so the labor of transporting their limbs would be greatly diminished. Yet I noticed that the beavers had evidently had little notion which way the tree would fall and had gnawed blindly away, with the single object of getting it to the ground. In many instances the main cut had been made, not on the side next the slough but on that away from it, a state of affairs which, as every woodsman knows, would tend to make the tree fall away from the water, as some of the trees had actually done.

Still closer to the camp I noticed an even more conclusive demonstration of the beaver's limitations. Three



spruce, perhaps a foot in diameter, grew close together, and in the centre of the triangular space between them there had grown a small poplar, four or five inches in diameter, whose limbs were closely entwined with the limbs and trunks of the spruce-trees. A beaver—possibly more than one—had set to work on the poplar and had cut it completely off, but—and how surprised he must have been!—the sapling had remained upright; in fact, it was so intertwined with the other trees that it could only have been released by cutting off some of its limbs. As the beaver could not climb up and do this, he had evidently been forced ultimately to give up the undertaking as a bad job, though a lot of unnecessary gnawing about the butt showed clearly that he had been reluctant to do so.

I do not say that all beaver would have been guilty of so foolish an undertaking as this, for there is doubtless individuality among beaver, just as there is among other animals and men. A great many people seem to fail to realize that animals have any individuality; even some naturalists are inclined to deal with the habits and nature of animals as if each and all of a given species are a fixed quantity, which, of course, is not true. I would not undertake to say that one *amœba* will not under given circumstances behave exactly like another *amœba* would have done, nor, so far as I know, has any one ever attempted to determine the line between higher and lower organisms at which individuality within a species begins; but it undoubtedly exists among dogs, horses, cattle, and among at least some kinds of birds.

When I was a small boy I had a great number of pigeons, over a hundred in all. To most of those who visited my loft and looked over my pets the birds no doubt all looked alike, as did the "coons" in the song, but I knew each bird, not only by its physical appearance but, in many cases, by differences in individuality. There, for example, was "Black Pigeon," my oldest rooster, a splendid, sturdy bird, and always helpful to his mate, "Old Whitey," in taking turns sitting on the eggs and feeding the young birds, but he had a weakness: he would philander occasionally with a "high-flying" female, upon whom likewise the bonds of matrimony sat lightly—a most unusual thing, by the way, among pigeons of this variety. Once when I happened to notice the guilty pair engaged in their illicit love-making, I took "Old Whitey" from her nest that she might behold what was going on while she was engaged in the homely task of warming her eggs. She sized up the situation in an instant, advanced upon the guilty pair in no uncertain manner, and with sundry pecks and flops scattered them and drove her mate home—I will not say for a curtain lecture! Then there was "Captain Rowdy," who always went growling and roaring around, yet who could never be brought actually to fight unless another bird tried to enter the "Captain's" box. Then there was the light-minded, lazy rooster who would sometimes neglect to relieve his mate in sitting on the eggs, to her disgust and anger, as she did not hesitate to make him realize—but I have made my point and, besides, am getting far afield from the Quadacha River.



As our supplies were beginning to run low, we were anxious to kill game of some sort, but the whole country was either a burn, overgrown with thick bush, or else it was covered with thick spruce timber, and the prospect of finding big game in such country was remote, nor did the mountain tops look at all promising. Toward evening I watched a long bar on which there were a few old moose tracks; I did so with the consciousness that if I could sit there for a month I would be reasonably certain to see a moose, but that I might also sit there for three weeks or more and get a shot at nothing. Joe undertook to watch for beaver nearer the camp, and just before nightfall I heard him shoot. As a good fat beaver would furnish us meat for several days, I felt quite hopeful as I stumbled back through the dark woods to camp, only to find that he had shot at the animal swimming in the slough and had missed!

Indians had told McConnell that back in the mountains the Quadacha split into two branches, and on the strength of this information he had tentatively, using dotted lines, indicated such a fork on his map of the Finlay country. We had already travelled farther than the distance to the Forks as shown on the map, but, in climbing round a cut bank on the previous afternoon we had noticed far ahead mountain gaps of such a character that we felt confident that the Forks lay there.

Joe was now thoroughly disgusted with the country we had entered, and for a couple of days he had been wanting to turn back to the Finlay. It was clear that unless we could kill game to eke out our supplies we



would be compelled to turn back soon, but I was determined at least to reach the Forks—if Forks existed. Early on the morning of September 3 we set out once more through bush saturated by rain. About ten o'clock we came opposite an immense limestone cliff, rising perhaps a thousand feet above the river; here we left our packs and travelled on, carrying nothing except our rifles and my camera. The going was wretched, but about noon we at last reached the spot where we expected the Forks to be, and, sure enough, we found them.

As the presence of the Forks bore out the authenticity of the information given by the Indians to McConnell, I was considerably surprised by one feature that attracted our attention the moment we reached the spot. On McConnell's map there is a glacier set down on the North Fork, and I had naturally assumed that it would be the North Fork that would be white. Instead, the North Fork showed clear water, while the East Fork was even whiter than is the main Quadacha at its mouth. Between the two streams rose a high mountain ridge that appeared to be continuous for a long distance eastward, making it apparent that the East Fork did not soon send an offshoot northward. Here, then, was an enigma the solution of which I could only guess at; my guesses were that either McConnell had located the glacier in the wrong place, or else that there were two glaciers. At that time I did not know—nor did I know until my return to the States—that McConnell had seen the glacier on the

North Fork from the top of Prairie Mountain, beyond the mouth of Fox River.

The two streams were so nearly equal in volume at that season of the year, that it is impossible to say definitely which is the larger, though I was inclined to think the East Fork. At any rate, the East Fork was the white Fork, and I concluded that the name Whitewater, or Quadacha, should attach to it. Both are good-sized streams, and neither is fordable.

So far as I then knew, or have since been able to ascertain, we were the first white men who had ever reached the Forks, and, in accordance with an "explorer's" prerogative, it seemed fitting that I should give the north branch a name. Now there are a number of persons who have attained prominence in the British Empire in recent years who have won my sincere admiration, and one of these was Reginald Warneford, the young Canadian lieutenant who, in 1915, caught a German Zeppelin returning from a murderous raid against women and children in England, and single-handed managed to drop upon that Zeppelin a bomb that sent it and its crew crashing to earth in the neighborhood of Ghent. The exploit was the more remarkable because the young officer had learned to fly only a few months before. The feat won for him the Victoria Cross, but soon after he lost his life through an accident. I wanted to name that stream Warneford River, and so I have set it down.

The neighborhood of the Forks is rendered doubly interesting by a peculiar upheaval of white limestone



running northwest by southeast. This upheaval is cut through by the Quadacha, but on the north side there rises the high cliff I have already mentioned. This cliff is merely a foot-hill of a tall, rugged peak that culminates in several pinnacles. To the eastward of this limestone upheaval the formation appears similar to that on the west side.

I should very much have liked to follow up the East Fork, or Quadacha proper, but conditions were unfavorable for such an undertaking. For one thing, my main motive in coming into the country had been to find some good hunting, and the prospect for doing so in the Quadacha region appeared to be remote, for the mountains we could see were most unpromising. Furthermore, as we had been unable to kill any big game, our food supply was sufficient for only two or three days, or about enough to get us back to our cache on the lake. Joe had displayed small enthusiasm for this expedition since the beginning, and, though I was now carrying as much weight as did he, he was constantly complaining of the hard work, and it had been difficult to get him even as far as the Forks. He was more than ever positive that the color of the Quadacha was due to white "cut banks," scoffed at the idea of there being glaciers in the region, and repeatedly declared that even if we should succeed in killing a "head" in that country he would not help to carry it out. In short, his attitude was in discouraging contrast with the cheerfulness with which he had worked on the way up the river. Remembrance of his past splendid work inclined me to overlook his behavior



now. The truth is that he was too far beyond "Joe Lavoie's Farthest North," and it was clear that however good a man he might be on trips where luxurious beds and big square meals abounded, he was not cut out for exploring.

If we had managed to kill game, I think his attitude would quickly have changed at the sight and taste of the good meat. But there was virtually nothing in the country except moose, and we had seen no place where it was worth while hunting them since we left the lake. With only two or three days of grub ahead, it was precarious to try the plan of "sit still" for moose along a river bar. For a couple of days we had hoped that a mountain that rose up just south of the Forks would prove to be a good place for either goats or caribou, but a careful study through our glasses of what appeared to be a promising draw showed that it was full of burned jack-pines and brush, while the summit looked too barren to be worth hunting.

Later, however, I regretted that we did not climb this mountain. Had we done so we would have beheld something twenty or thirty miles farther on that I would have reached if I had been compelled to travel alone and starve every foot of the way back!

After writing our names and the date of our visit on the smoothed trunk of a spruce, we, therefore, turned our backs on Quadacha Forks. So far as we knew, no other white men had ever visited the place before us. Nor did we feel that we would encourage any one to visit it again.

I was reluctantly forced to the melancholy conclusion that I should never be able to answer the question, "What makes the Quadacha white?"

## CHAPTER XII

### THE GREAT GLACIER

BEFORE turning back from the Forks of the Quadacha I determined that we would ascend some peak that would give me a bird's-eye view of the whole country. It was clear that the tall, barren mountain that lay to the eastward of the lake in which we had seen the moose was well fitted for this purpose, and, moreover, it lay on the homeward way. I felt confident that if there were any striking features of the ranges, we would be able to see them from its summit.

Both our packs, and especially Joe's, were much lighter than when we set out on the Quadacha trip, and we were also able to avoid some of the muskegs, burns, and other bad going that had delayed us on the way out. We travelled very late on the afternoon we turned back, and by nightfall were fully ten miles from the Forks. As I had been lucky enough to shoot a willow-grouse, we had a good supper and slept well. We made an early start next morning, for we realized that we must not only reach and climb Observation Peak, as I shall henceforth call the mountain we meant to climb, but it was extremely probable that we would find no water on the top, and would be forced to descend it also. We were on our way by seven o'clock, and by half past eight we had reached the base of the mountain. From that point there ran upward for many miles a rather



steep, timbered slope, which was succeeded, about fifteen hundred feet below the summit, by a bare, steep pitch. A little way up we came to a rushing, tumbling brook that tore down through a rocky gorge.

“Last chance for a drink,” said Joe, “better fill up.”

And “fill up” we did.

“I’m going to take a little with me,” said I, taking out of my pack a small tin that had contained dehydrated onions. “You had better do the same.”

But he thought otherwise, and we set out once more. We found the climb hard work, for the slope, which had appeared level from below, was badly broken. To avoid a draw that terminated in a terrific cliff, we were forced to the left, and had to make the ascent of a lower shoulder, between which and the main peak lay a deep, narrow cleft. We descended into this cleft, and there stopped for lunch. The cleft formed a sort of high pass between the Quadacha country and an elevated valley that drains southward into Paul’s Branch. On both sides the slopes were thickly timbered with beautiful balsams, but the bottom of the pass, for a width of perhaps two rods, was completely free of either timber or bushes, and was overgrown with bunch-grass.

If we had had plenty of water and had not been so weary, the spot would have been one of the most delightful ones we had yet seen. But the nearest water, except for the half-pint in my little can, was a thousand feet below us at the foot of a cliff, and I was so nearly exhausted that I seriously doubted whether I would be able to negotiate the two thousand feet of altitude that

still remained between us and the summit. My exhaustion was not due solely to that day's effort, but was the culmination of days of packing a heavy load over rough country. It was not that I lacked strength generally, but that my legs were rebelling against climbing. On level ground I could still make good progress; strangely enough, on steep slopes where I was forced to use my hands as well as my legs it was not so bad; on any slope where I could step flat-footed I did fairly; but on a slope where I was compelled to walk on my toes the exhausted leg muscles that I must use in making my feet and toes rigid protested against their work.

However, with my bit of water I made a small cup of very strong tea, and this seemed to put new life into me—even more than did the rest of the lunch. I summoned all my will-power into action, put my leg muscles under martial law, and swore I would get to the top. More quickly and with greater ease than I had dared to hope, I managed to bid adieu to the last balsam and pass timber-line, with its gnarled trees, stunted by bitter cold, and twisted by ten thousand storms. Thenceforward the ascent was very steep, up a slope composed mainly of slate, in places broken up into scree by the action of freezing and thawing, in places remaining in rough cliffs. Several times we noticed some very good-looking quartz, though we gave scant heed to it. If a railway should ever run up the Finlay Valley, it may be worth some prospector's while to examine this mountain more carefully.

Four times there towered above us what we thought



ON THE SUMMIT OF OBSERVATION PEAK.





was the top, and three times on reaching that "top" we found that it was only a bench, and that beyond it the mountain still rose upward. The fourth time, however, we at last gained the summit, which proved to be rather a long narrow ridge than a peak.

The view that burst upon our sight was well worth all the hard effort the climb had cost us. To northwestward lay the upper Finlay and its tributary the Fox, winding like silver ribbons along the great Intermontane Valley, and through the passes between rugged ranges; to southward we could even see the peak that stands guard over Deserter's Canyon. In every direction there unfolded a magnificent panorama of mountains, nameless ranges, hundreds of nameless peaks, taller than any in the whole Appalachian system. Even Joe, who hitherto had disliked this Quadacha trip, waxed enthusiastic.

"I have never before seen anything to equal it," he declared. And he spoke from a knowledge of the mountain region of southern British Columbia and Washington.

It was to eastward and northeastward that we turned our main attention. For we had attained a point of vantage whence we could overlook the whole of the unexplored region of the Rockies from Laurier Pass on the south, to the Liard River on the north. If the region possessed a great secret, to us it must now be unfolded.

What did we see?

A glance showed us that there was no heaven-kissing peak "taller than Mount Robson."

There were, however, several magnificent mountains higher than any along the Finlay. Much the finest of all these lay far to the northeast. It was a vast affair, with three great summits, two of them peaks, the third and tallest an immense block.

This mountain was big enough to have aroused our enthusiasm, yet we gave comparatively scant heed to it.

For down the south slope of it, filling a great valley, miles wide and miles long, there flowed a perfectly immense, glistening glacier.

"That is what makes the Quadacha white," conceded Joe.

There could be no doubt about it. I had realized ever since seeing the river that it would require a good-sized rock-mill to grind up enough silt to color such a large stream as the Quadacha, but here was a mill amply big enough for the job.

We were forty or fifty miles from it, eighty at least as one would travel, yet it loomed up far and away the most notable phenomenon in that whole magnificent panorama. It is the biggest thing in the whole Finlay country. I venture to predict that when the glacier has been more closely examined it will be found to be one of the biggest, if not the very biggest, in the whole Rocky Mountain system.

From our post on Observation Peak the great glacier lay  $10^{\circ}$  east of north by compass, but since the compass in this region has a variation of  $33^{\circ}$  to eastward, the glacier really lay  $43^{\circ}$  east of north.

The glacier is, I repeat for emphasis, a vast river of





LOOKING NORTHEASTWARD FROM OBSERVATION PEAK, GLACIER IN DISTANCE.



ice, flowing down a great wide valley between two mountains. We were too far to make out much in detail, but, looking through our glasses, the ice appeared to be of great height, and the snow-field behind it of immense extent. Beyond question, the whole is an immense affair covering many square miles of territory.

In addition to the great peak and the big glacier, we discerned several other features of interest. On the North Fork of the Quadacha, or Warneford River, there is at least one, perhaps two or three much smaller glaciers. The most notable of these lay  $12^{\circ}$  west of north by compass, which means about  $21^{\circ}$  east of the true north. Even this glacier would be considered notable in the Rockies of the United States, but it seemed a pygmy compared with the big one. About  $30^{\circ}$  south of the true east, and apparently on the extreme eastern side of the system, we could see a fine, snow-capped mountain, which I venture to guess is the "Great Snow Mountain" seen by Vreeland from the Laurier Pass country, and set down by him on his map. The mountains on the eastern side of the system bore a great deal more snow than those on the western side, though they are, with two or three exceptions, not a great deal taller. The reason is of course, that they are partly cut off from the warm winds from the Pacific. These winds make the season in the Finlay country much later than it is at the same elevation in western Alberta even as far south as the headwaters of the Saskatchewan. In the latter region early in September, 1910, we were almost constantly in snow, even in the river-valleys, at an elevation of a little



more than five thousand feet, while peaks seven or eight thousand feet high were all the time covered with snow. On the Quadacha, several hundred miles farther north, peaks seven or eight thousand feet high were not only often destitute of snow but also of water. It was only toward the last of our trip that such peaks were blanketed with a heavy snowfall.

The ranges run parallel to the Finlay. First comes a range of moderate height, tall enough to reach well above timber-line, then a valley, then a higher range of the same general formation, then a second valley. Beyond this valley lies a third range of entirely different nature, a narrow, extremely rugged range of whitish limestone, which seems to have been thrust right up through the system. This range is broken below Quadacha Forks by the Quadacha River, but it reappears beyond and runs north as far as the eye can follow it. To the southeast also it extends at least as far as we could see. The range is easily recognizable in both directions because of its conspicuous color, and also because its peaks are much more jagged than those on either side of it.

It was three o'clock when we reached the top, and the sky was overcast by broken clouds, though fortunately most of them hung high. I took several exposures of the most striking features of the panorama, and particularly of the great glacier. But the conditions of light were unfavorable, and, in my anxiety to allow for the lateness of the hour and the clouded state of the sky, I ran to the other extreme and overexposed. When the

films were developed on my return home, the mountains appeared with fair distinctness, and also the valley of the winding Quadacha, but the glacier was hardly discernible on the prints at all. Any one who has experienced the difficulty of securing good photographs of distant snow peaks will readily understand the reason for my failure—particularly when I add that at no time was I able to take an exposure of the glacier when the sun was shining on all of it. If, because I am unable to present a good picture, any one is inclined to be sceptical, I merely paraphrase the words of a well-known personage concerning a certain “River of Doubt,” and say that the “Glacier is still there!”

I venture to hope that some specialist in glaciers will be moved to undertake an expedition to examine the phenomenon more closely and in a scientific manner. I am confident that the results would well repay his expenditure of time and money. Even Joe, who had betrayed not the slightest interest hitherto in hunting glaciers, waxed so enthusiastic over it that he declared:

“I would give a month’s wages to reach it!”

I hope some day again to undertake the long and toilsome river journey just for a chance to reach that magnificent river of ice and ascertain its dimensions, for the desire to do so has grown upon me since my return. But I fear that some other man than I will stand first beneath that mighty wall of ice; some other man’s feet will first press the wide snow-field that feeds it.

One right I claim—the right to name the mountain that rises beside the glacier. In doing so I wish to

honor the ablest Briton of his time, one of the ablest of all times, the William Pitt of the mighty world conflict, a man equally able to solve momentous problems in peace and war. I wish it to be called Mount Lloyd George.



## CHAPTER XIII

### WE TRY THE FOX RIVER RANGE

BEFORE sunset we arrived at our little cache and the old Indian camp in a clump of spruce beside the lake. We had expected to remain in this valley for a couple of days in the hope of getting a bull moose, but as watching that evening and next morning proved unproductive, I set out to reconnoitre and discovered that there were no recent tracks anywhere in the vicinity. I thereupon decided to move farther up the valley, but neither on the way, at the beaver pond, nor at another lake beyond did I find any fresh tracks. In the shallow water of the upper lake I saw the head and antlers of a bull that had probably been shot by Indians a year or two before. The antlers were in a good state of preservation, were exceedingly symmetrical, and had a spread of exactly four feet. From what I could learn this was a big head for the Finlay country; for some reason the Finlay moose do not grow big heads. It is possible that the moose had left the valley because of the changing season, but it is much more probable that we had scared them out on our way in. At least two had seen us, while our camp-fire, built as it was right across their trail, had been visible from the mountain sides for a long distance. Joe insisted that some of the tracks were fresh, but, great as are his merits as a canoeman, I had discovered

that he is not infallible in hunting matters, and so disregarded his arguments, somewhat to his indignation. Though he has killed much game, he is what may be termed a "river hunter"; that is, one who travels up and down rivers shooting whatever game he may see. Such hunting calls for no special knowledge of animals or skill in finding them, and even a tyro who is much on the water in a game country is certain to slaughter a good many animals.

By avoiding the higher summits and following a cleft in the range we saved ourselves much hard climbing, and, since we were travelling light, made rapid progress. As we were descending the slope on the Finlay side we scared up a covey of fool hens, which scattered and lit in the neighboring spruce. I was lucky enough to decapitate two with two bullets, while Joe fired four times at one, and finally shot it through the body. Hardly had the echoes died away when three answering reports came from far down in the Finlay Valley.

"Siwash!" said Joe. "They think we are their people."

As we had no desire to cultivate their acquaintance, we made no reply. Their presence made me a bit uneasy for the safety of our cache on the island in the Quadacha, but when we reached that place a little before sunset, we found canoe and cache untouched, and breathed sighs of relief, for the possibility of being left without canoe or supplies in so remote a region was not to be regarded lightly.

Next day we put our stuff once more aboard *The Submarine*, and set out up the Finlay. We had gone only half a mile when we came to a deserted cabin standing in a thick grove of spruce on the north bank. It had evidently been occupied some winters before by Booth, the squaw-man, for on a marten-stretcher he had written a message to the effect that grub was scarce, and that he was forced to go elsewhere to get a supply. There was a tiny sheet-iron stove in this cabin, and, as often happens, a pack-rat had pre-empted this stove for his domicile. He had dragged in a great quantity of weeds and heaped them over the stove, and had made a nest inside. When I began to poke round the stove the rat became panic-stricken and attempted to climb the inside of the pipe. Twice he made considerable progress, as I could tell from the scratching, only to lose his footing each time and take an inglorious tumble in a cloud of soot. These pack-rats are interesting creatures, and I shall have more to say of them later.

Now and then we caught glorious glimpses of the mountain range lying to the west of the Fox River valley. This range terminated on the south at the pass through which the Finlay breaks its way from the west, and here it rises up very steep, at an angle of probably  $45^{\circ}$ . On the southern face and along the summit this range is practically destitute of either trees or bushes, and is covered with bunch grass, hence the name "Prairie Mountain," bestowed by McConnell upon the most southern elevation. From Prairie Mountain the range gradually rises in height toward the north, and culmi-



nates in some tall and exceedingly rugged peaks. Both from our present point of vantage and from the mountains up the Quadacha the backbone of the ridge appeared to be fairly level and continuous, and it was Joe's theory that if we were once on this backbone, we could travel northward with great speed, and he was certain we would be sure to find caribou and other game there.

Three or four miles above the Quadacha we came in sight of the mouth of the Tochieca or Fox River, and caught sight of the smoke and tents of a little Siwash encampment, just below the junction on the north bank of the Finlay. I was none too much pleased at finding the aborigines here, both on account of their ravages among the game, and also because I feared they might disturb our cache. But we put the best face possible on the matter, and ran our canoe upon the beach beneath the camp. Our approach had long since been noticed, and we were greeted by four bucks who came scrambling down the bank, while a couple of squaws, who had been graining a moose hide, peered furtively down at us from behind the bushes.

One of the men was middle-aged, another a young fellow of perhaps twenty-four, while the other two were boys still in their teens. All wore civilized clothes except for moccasins. The older man did not speak English, but the other grown-up, who told us that he was a son of Chief Pierre and a brother of Aleck, spoke it pretty well, as did the younger of the boys. The old fellow was not particularly prepossessing, but

the younger ones were both good-looking and intelligent. They had been in the region for months, and were about out of supplies.

"Gun empty," said Pierre's son, "no tea, no tobac. Hell without tobac!"

He wanted to know if we would not trade them a supply of these articles for some dried moose meat, of which they had a goodly quantity. First, however, he was anxious to learn how every one was at Fort Grahame, what his father and Aleck were doing, and so on. I confess that his concern about the health and well-being of his friends and relatives prepossessed me in his favor. We told what little we knew on these subjects, and then gave the Indians a few .30-30 cartridges and a little tea and tobacco, taking in exchange a small piece of dried meat.

Before the exchange was effected I asked the party to line up in front of the camp and let me take their pictures. The men did so willingly enough, but the two squaws replied to the proposal, as transmitted through their male relatives, with protesting jabbers, and hid in the tents, much to the amusement of the men. One of the women was young and comely, the other a very aged hag, whose wrinkled, leathery skin made her look ninety at least, though she may not have been above sixty or seventy. From the tone of her voice, which was frequently lifted in orders or protests, we judged that she made it pretty lively for the other members of the party. The dogs, too, objected to picture-taking, and hung back, growling. When I opened

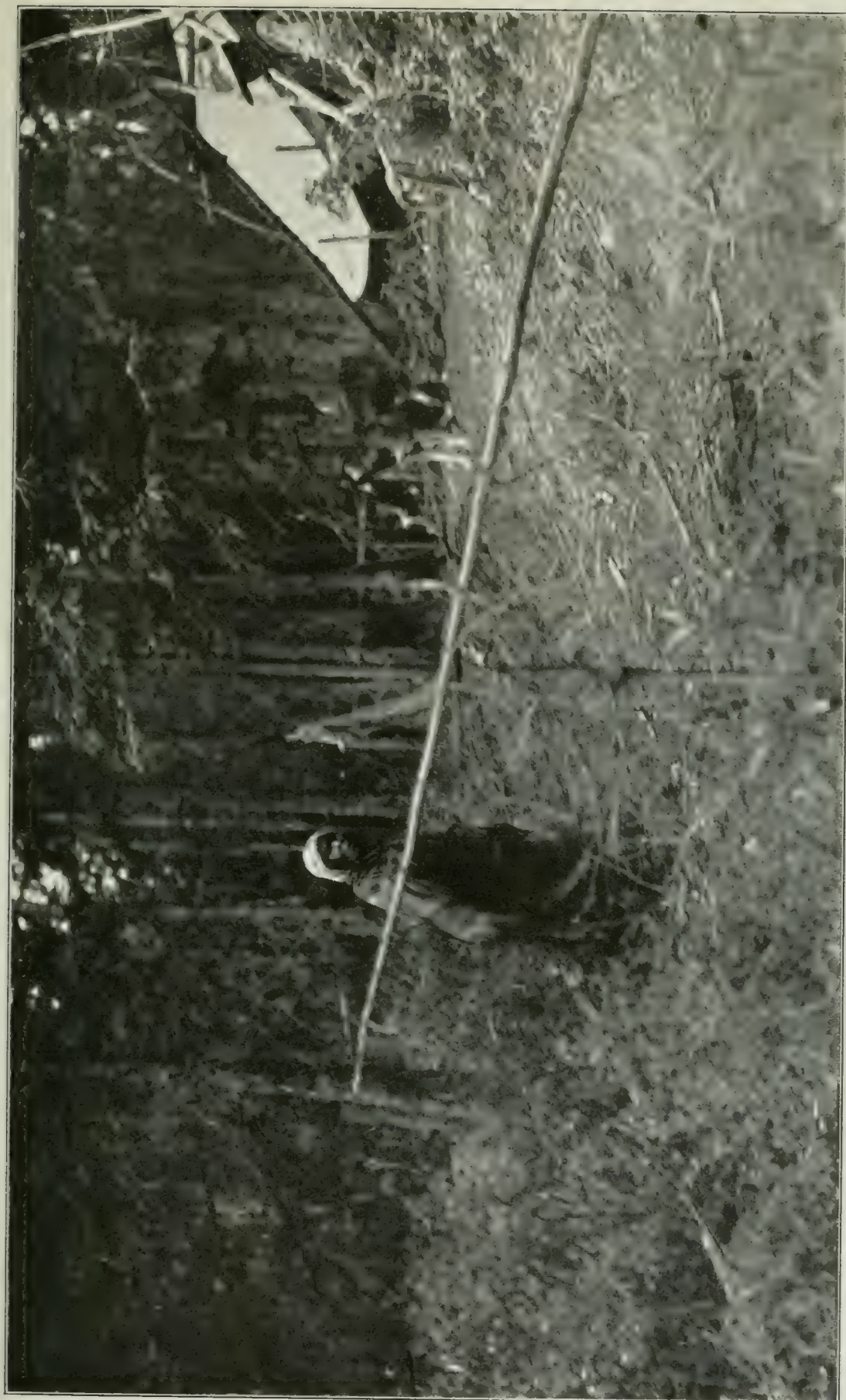
the Graflex, the biggest, a great surly, ugly brute, gave a yelp of fear and dived off into the brush.

Later, while Joe was getting the tea and tobacco out of the boat, the ancient dame so far forgot her fears that she came down close to the boat and jabbered away at a great rate, probably telling the men what they should ask for. I took advantage of the opportunity to train the camera on her, whereupon the men, entering into the spirit of the thing, began to laugh. She quickly perceived what I was about and started to turn away, but she was too late. The men thought the thing a great joke, and they chuckled for some time over it.

Subsequently at Fort Grahame I learned from Fox that this old squaw has a remarkable history. Many years before her husband had died and had left her with several small children. But she was a rustler, hunted game, and even trapped bears. "There was not a family in the tribe that was better provided for than hers," said Fox. This account greatly raised the old lady in my estimation. What a life she must have led in the wilderness, and what a story her experiences would make if one could only know them! Cold, hunger, privations, adventures with wild animals, struggles to find the wherewithal to feed hungry mouths and clothe naked backs would all find a place therein. How interesting would be the single matter of her view of the white man and the experiences of herself and people with the members of that race.

I confess that this little hunting-party—or family-party, as you will—impressed me most favorably. There





"SHE STARTED TO TURN AWAY BUT SHE WAS TOO LATE."



was something of the old, self-reliant pose of the primitive red man in the men, and there was pride in the tone of Pierre's son when he indicated with a wave of his hand the mountains and valleys around us, and said: "This is my country." All the party were physically good specimens, for they had never had much experience with fire-water and the white man's diseases. Their bearing was utterly different from that of Indians one meets close to "civilization." It was evident that they still regarded themselves as lords of the land, and us as friendly travellers therein.

Soon after leaving this interesting camp we reached the mouth of Fox River, and had great difficulty in passing it, as the stream dashes into the Finlay with great violence, and creates a dangerous eddy near the opposite bank. The Fox follows the west side of the Great Intermontane Valley, and contains so many rapids and low falls that it is not considered navigable. McConnell's party made their way on foot some distance up the river, and since then a number of white men have penetrated the region. Among these were Frank and Alfred Perry, one of whom is, I understand, a relative of Fox at Fort Grahame. Somewhere up the stream they were charged by two grizzlies, and Frank Perry killed the last one only a few feet from the muzzle of his rifle.

In answer to our questions, Pierre's son had said that the southern end of the Fox River range was not good for game, and had advised us to go up to the Long Canyon and hunt in the mountains around the head of a stream called Bower Creek. The mountains there were, he de-



clared, "white with sheep, black with caribou." His account rather shook my faith in the Fox River range, but Joe declared that the Indian was probably lying, so we stuck to our plan, landed at the foot of Prairie Mountain, and made a cache on a spot that had been occupied some weeks before by the Huston party, whose names were written on a blazed tree. We planned that if the range did prove disappointing, we would turn northwestward and try to reach the region in which the Huston party had found caribou. It was this region that Witt had recommended to me at Prince George.

Next morning, taking as much food as we could carry and each of us his heaviest blanket, we started up Prairie Mountain. We were unlucky enough to blunder among some steep cliffs, and not only had to work hard but, encumbered as we were with heavy packs, we encountered no small amount of danger. Once I thought that Joe would surely fall, and as I was directly beneath him, my own prospects looked none too bright, but he managed to regain his footing, and presently we reached better going.

By noon we had reached the summit, and again had a splendid view of the Intermontane Valley, the Finlay and its tributaries, and mountains in every direction. We gazed with special interest at the Quadacha country, and were able to see many of the natural features of that region, including the glacier on the headwaters of Warneford River. It is this glacier evidently that McConnell sets down on his map, as he writes me that he saw it from the top of this mountain. Later we

caught a distant glimpse of Mount Lloyd George and the Great Glacier from much farther up the range.

As it threatened rain and Joe was worn out, we camped early that afternoon in a wooded ravine a few miles up the range. There was plenty of water and splendid balsam boughs for beds, and we were able to make ourselves quite comfortable.

We had hoped to find caribou sign, or better still the animals themselves, on top of Prairie Mountain, but found nothing except a few old moose tracks and droppings. The moose, though a denizen of the lower levels, occasionally strolls up to timber-line, and even passes beyond when travelling.

I spent what remained of the afternoon prowling along the top of the range ahead. It was delightful country: the summit bare of trees, and except where too rocky, overgrown with bunch-grass, with scattered spruce, aspen, jack-pine, balsam, juniper, and kinnikinnic in some of the hollows and ravines. With such splendid feed on this sky pasture, it seemed that there ought to be game to eat it, but I saw only a pair of big blue grouse, at the head of one of which I fired but missed. Doubtless the place is in too easy reach of the Indians who hunt the Fox River valley. In this valley and in that of the Finlay to westward I could see many lakelets, and around these the Siwash no doubt kill plenty of moose.

I repeat that it was a most delightful country, and despite a drizzling rain that fell at intervals, I vastly enjoyed that afternoon's walk up there on the roof of things. After so many weeks spent in a region of for-

ests, it gave one a sense of relief to be once more walking in the open over grass. There was plenty of scenery to look at, and if I grew weary of gazing at the Fox River valley and the Quadacha country, I had only to walk two or three hundred yards to look down into the Finlay Valley to westward and at the forbidding ranges that loom up beyond, while there was always the chance that I might come in sight of caribou, or even a silver-tip.

Among the most soul-satisfying hours that I have ever spent have been those passed among high mountains, rambling about timber-line and summit, alone with primordial facts and eternal verities.



## CHAPTER XIV

### AN EXPERIENCE WITH MOUNTAIN-GOATS

My natural pride as a hunter would lead me to suppress this chapter, but as this book purports to be a veracious chronicle of our experiences on the headwaters of Peace River, I swallow my pride and will not attempt to misrepresent anything even by exercising the nice art of suppression.

It snowed considerably the night following our arrival on the summit of the Fox River range, and though the sun next day soon melted the snow on the lower slopes, a thin white mantle still clung around the higher summits. A fierce, raw wind from the west cut us to the marrow as we trudged along northward, alternately ascending and descending, and so strong did it become that when we came to some knife-edges we felt in danger of being picked up and hurled into the deep gorges below. The farther we went the higher grew our altitude, and toward noon, as it was evident that we were getting away from all fuel, we tore off a few gnarled sticks from some half-dead stunted spruce with which, when we reached the summit of the peak ahead, we made a wretched fire, melted some snow, and brewed some tea. The backbone was proving much more uneven than it had appeared from the Quadacha country, and we dis-

covered that high lateral ridges running northeastward had hidden deep clefts, the passage of which took much time and effort. Although we kept a sharp lookout, we saw no game of any kind, but we did happen upon a few very old goat and caribou tracks, and a place where months before a grizzly had "done his assessment work," as Joe put it. By this last I mean a hole where a grizzly had ripped out a wagon-load of earth and stones trying to dig out a whistler.

In the afternoon we came to a spot where there loomed up ahead the most forbidding rocky peak we had yet seen along this range, while to the right there lay a deep wide basin, at the head of which lay a big patch of old snow. We descended into the basin to camp, and found its floor covered with grass, while a clear, cold stream trickled down from the patch of snow. We noticed some old bear and caribou signs, but the only tenants of the basin seemed to be some siffleurs, one of which persisted in uttering his piercing whistle at short intervals.

When we reached timber-line at a spot a little above where the basin met another extending into the range farther north, we camped—not a very satisfactory location, for the wind blew chill from seemingly every direction, dry wood was hard to get, and the little brook had disappeared beneath vast masses of slide rock, necessitating a long trip back toward the head of the basin after the all-essential fluid. By about sunset, however, we had finished our suppers, and I set off with our two biggest tin pots for a fresh supply of water with which

to wash the dishes and make a bannock. I took my rifle with me, and, as a climb of two or three hundred feet would enable me to look over into the basin to north of us, I summoned up enough energy to make it, hoping that I might see game of some sort or at least find water near at hand.

To ascend the spur that separated the mouths of the two basins was a matter of a few minutes only, and, arrived at the top, I looked cautiously over. I saw at once that the basin was not unlike the one into which we had descended, though at the head it was walled in by a tremendous unscalable cliff. I also perceived that if we had continued on the backbone, we would easily have been able to avoid both basins, as neither was a pass, as Joe had contended. On the side nearest me and close at hand lay a beautiful little tarn, or lakelet, at which I could fill my pails. At the head of the basin there was a considerable patch of old snow.

These various features received, however, little more than a passing glance, for my eyes almost immediately caught sight of an object moving on a green plot close beside the snow. I quickly hauled forth my glasses and focussed them on this object. Up to that moment I had never yet beheld a living Rocky Mountain goat, but there could be no mistaking the long, fluffy, white wool, the square blocky outlines, the stiff jointless gait of the beast before me.

The sight exhilarated me strangely. It was one of the moments for which men will travel thousands of miles and undergo all sorts of hardships to experience.



The mere sight of that wild animal grazing in his native haunt beneath those rugged cliffs was a great recompense.

Best of all, the prospect seemed bright for me to bag him. To be sure, the sun was setting and the basin was already in deep shadow, but I knew there would be shooting light for half an hour—just time enough to sneak past the lakelet over the low knoll that rose in the centre of the basin and put a .401 bullet into that white hide where it would do the most good. The chance seemed so excellent that I felt thoroughly confident that luck had turned, and I pictured to myself the pleasure I would enjoy an hour later strolling into camp and nonchalantly laying down a goat head and a quarter of fresh meat.

Hurriedly picking out what seemed the best route, I quietly stole down into the basin past the tarn; there I left the two pots, and then crept along the side of the low knoll toward my quarry. There were little clumps of dwarf balsam and juniper that aided me greatly, and I felt that all was going well until, on looking round a clump of juniper, I discovered that the billy had quitted the low ground near the patch of snow and was making his way up the ridge that bounded the basin on the north. His pace was leisurely; he stopped now and then to crop a particularly enticing titbit; it was plainly apparent that he had no knowledge of my presence, and had merely been moved at that unlucky moment to climb the ridge. Away went my confident belief that billy was as good as mine, for to stalk him now would

necessitate a *détour* of miles, and the light was already failing fast.

Plainly it was a matter of letting him go undisturbed or of taking a long-range shot. The former would have been the better hunting, but my long run of poor luck had rendered me impatient, while I could feel no certainty that I should be able to find him again on the morrow, and, besides, I have ever dearly loved making long shots. He was at least five hundred yards away, but how much farther I did not know, nor do I know now. I took a look at him through the sights, found that I could get reasonably good aim, ran the rear sight up to five hundred yards, aimed deliberately, and let drive. At the shot billy bounced up in the air, came down stiff-legged, and started up the ridge with discouraging agility. After travelling forty or fifty yards, however, his curiosity overcame his fear and he stopped, whereupon again I pulled the trigger, only to have the process repeated. I forget now just how many times I fired at him—it was either three or four—then I saw that it was useless, and stopped shooting. Clearly I had misjudged the range.

Billy hardly knew what to make of it all, for he kept stopping and looking back in a puzzled manner, and when he reached the top of the ridge a thousand feet above the basin floor, he stalked back and forth, evidently bursting with curiosity as to what had been making that infernal racket. Soon he was joined by two other goats, a nanny and a kid, and they, too, gazed inquiringly down into the basin. The kid particularly seemed



to have imbibed some of paterfamilias's curiosity, for it kept hopping up on a big block of stone as if to get a better view. But as I was careful to keep behind the juniper, they saw nothing, and I have no doubt, went to bed that night still mystified about "that noise."

I remained hidden until it was so dark in the basin that I knew they could not see me, and then set out for camp. So long as I remained I could still see those precious goats silhouetted against the fading pink sky, still fussing around and evidently much exercised about the matter.

When I got back to camp I had two pails of water but no goat head, and, worst of all, had to explain to Joe how it was that I had fired so many shots without killing any game. Of course, he criticised the performance, insisting that if I had refrained from shooting we would have been able to find the goats in the morning, whereas now they would leave for parts unknown.

When we set out next morning and reached a point whence we could overlook the basin, sure enough there were no goats in sight. We crossed the mouth of the basin and began to ascend the ridge beyond. As it was a stiff, hard climb, we paused several times, and when we were half-way up, I suddenly saw all three goats in a hollow close to the patch of snow, and not a hundred yards from the point where I had first seen the billy the evening before. We were a long way off, and, as the animals were grazing peacefully, it was quite evident that they had not seen us. Once more the prospect seemed propitious. We had the whole day before us,



the wind was favorable, and it looked as if all I would have to do would be to sneak back down the ridge, crawl up on the unsuspecting animals, and fire.

I made the bottom of the ridge unperceived, and was creeping along the slope of the knoll rising from the basin floor when, looking back at Joe on the mountain-side, I saw him make a signal we had agreed upon that meant the animals were moving to the left.

“Ha!” thought I to myself, “they are going to the tarn for water! I can crawl up to the edge of the bluff overlooking it and have a certain shot at forty yards.”

Accordingly I crept off in that direction, and finally reached a point whence I could command a view of the whole head of the basin. Imagine my disgust when I discovered that, instead of travelling toward the tarn, the goats were grazing upward on a green grassy slope, and were nearing the rough cliff above. I could go no farther without being perceived, yet I was still at least four hundred yards away, and I did not like to risk any more long shots, with the distance uncertain. Therefore, I lay there helplessly and watched the animals slowly mount the cliff. Through my glasses I could see that the billy had a good pair of needle-sharp horns, and that his coat was much whiter than those of the nanny and kid, both of which had probably been rolling in the dirt. The whiteness of a clean mountain-goat, I pause to remark here, is astonishing; as pronounced as anything I can think of in nature. Under other circumstances to have watched the skill and ease with which those seemingly awkward animals walked up that al-

most sheer cliff would have been exceedingly interesting, but I confess that at that moment the sight gave me no pleasure. I had left my cap and sweater behind me, in order to make the stalk unencumbered, and half an hour of lying on the frozen ground with a bitter wind blowing through my closely cropped hair made me heartily wish I had elected to wear them. The animals had, however, reached such a position that I could not back out without being noticed, nor could I go forward without the same result. From the speed with which the goats were going it was evident that they were not in a hurry, and might spend several hours on the cliff. Anything I could do would have its drawbacks, so finally in desperation I simply rose to my feet and walked toward the foot of the cliff, thinking that I would at least have the satisfaction of seeing what the animals would do when they perceived me.

They accepted the sudden apparition more calmly than I expected. In fact, I had walked a hundred yards or so toward them before they seemed to decide that any action was demanded on their part. The nanny was the first to decide that the neighborhood was becoming unhealthy. She led the way diagonally up the cliff, with the kid following, and billy leisurely protecting the rear.

The animals were so distant that I hardly expected to fire at them, but the billy presently stopped on a ledge broadside on, and, though the sun was shining in my eyes, I could not resist the temptation to take a chance. At the moment he was probably a thousand feet up the

cliff, and he certainly was four or five hundred yards away in a direct line. Had I been able to measure the exact distance, I would not have known how to set the sights for that kind of shot. As it was, I fired at least five cartridges at him, a couple at him standing, the rest as he climbed the cliff. All went wild, though how wild I could not tell, for the bullets flattened on the cliff and gave no indication of where they were striking. Seeing that I was merely wasting ammunition, of which my supply was scanty, I ceased shooting and watched the procession. The nanny and kid hurriedly made their way to the summit and disappeared. The billy, however, climbed up to a perfectly inaccessible ledge, took his stand there, and gazed truculently down in my direction, as if to say:

“I dare you up here!”

If it had not been that I had read a good deal about the character of mountain-goats, I would have felt confident that I had wounded this animal. As it was, I concluded that he was merely too lazy to go higher and, feeling himself safe, decided to stay put where he was.

For me to climb the cliff was utterly impossible. To have reached the summit would have required hours of hard labor, and would have been useless, for the goat would not have been visible from the summit. Neither was he visible from the foot of the cliff; he could only be seen from a long distance back from it. For a bit I thought of making a *détour* back into the basin south of us and trying to make an approach from the side, but



after walking back to the tarn I obtained a view that convinced me that at best I could obtain only a long-range shot, while, of course, I could not be sure that he would be obliging enough to remain on the ledge while I was making the *détour*.

The truth was that the only feasible way of killing him that day would have been to get as close as possible on the floor of the basin, and to have kept shooting till he dropped. As one could not tell where the bullets were striking, this course would have necessitated an unlimited supply of cartridges, and I had no more to spare on uncertainties. Even if one had been lucky enough to kill him, his body would probably have lodged on the cliff, while had he fallen all that frightful distance, it was ten to one that his horns would have been broken.

If we had remained a few days in the region, I think it likely that we would ultimately have managed to outwit the animals, but I was in a hurry to get to the caribou and sheep country, and decided that the better plan would be to move on and trust to another interview with billy on our way back. Furthermore, we were both confident that, now we had reached the goat country, we would see many more—in fact, this feeling had been a strong factor in determining my course both times I had seen the animals. Therefore, we climbed out of the basin with our packs and travelled on up the range. At the top of the ridge we found goat beds, and it was evident that the spot was one of their main places of resort.

As long as we remained in sight billy continued

valiantly to hold his position on the cliff, while the wind blew through his whiskers.

I confess that I took my leave feeling very humble and disgusted: disgusted because it had been my ill luck to have the billy twice move by idle impulse from spots where I would soon have had him at my mercy; humble, because I had not managed better, guessed distances better, shot better. But such is hunting—I suppose that is why it is so fascinating.

As I have already said, we left fully expecting to return that way and have another trial. As it happened, we returned by another route. For aught I know, billy is still standing there upon the cliff where we left him. Wherever he is, may his tribe increase!

## CHAPTER XV

### WE TURN DOWN TO THE LONG CANYON

THE hope that we had at last reached a good game country was destined to disillusionment. All that day we made our way northwestward along the range without seeing either goats or other big game, and few traces of any. More discouraging still, we had reached a region in which the going was all up-and-down work. Hardly would we surmount one summit ere we would come to a deep cleft, often many hundreds of feet deep, which we must pass before we could make further progress. The range that had promised from the Quadacha country to be smooth and level like the top of a sweet-potato ridge, proved on closer acquaintance to be more like the cutting edge of a cross-cut saw. By camping time we were thoroughly discouraged, especially since the country ahead looked more difficult and forbidding than any we had yet traversed. Progress henceforth could not be otherwise than painfully slow, and we began to fear that again we would reach the bottom of our grub supply before coming to a real game country. The physical conditions along this range were almost ideal for either sheep, goats, or caribou, but the Siwash evidently had hunted it thoroughly; in fact, near the little tarn where we had seen the goats I had found a recent camp around which well-picked bones were scattered. The three goats



were evidently survivors of a larger band, and we now reproached ourselves for not having stayed and hunted them. Finally, as we neared some black and seemingly impassable crags, Joe stopped and turned to me and said:

"This range is no good. It's not what I thought it would be at all."

"I have been disgusted with it for a long time," I returned. "Shall we try for the country where the Huston party had their luck?"

"We shall do no good here," he said with conviction.

I was of the opinion that if we would follow the western foot-hills of the range we were on, we would get into the country we desired to reach, but a rough sketch-map given me by Huston showed their trail starting from the Long Canyon, and Joe thought we would better turn down to the Canyon.

"I'll leave you at the Canyon and go down the river after the canoe and more grub," said he. "I can make the trip in two days."

"We'll make a decision about that when we get to the Canyon," I decided.

We camped late that afternoon in the gorge of a little creek, a gorge so rough and narrow that we had much difficulty in finding a level spot large enough for our tent. Rain fell throughout the night and during the next day, while a snow-storm raged among the peaks overhead, but at noon, mindful of our diminishing grub supply, we defied the weather and set out. Of all the disagreeable travel we experienced during the whole trip that was undoubtedly the worst. Much of the time

we were forced to wade in the bed of the creek, while the rain and the saturated boughs of willows and spruce soon wet us to the skin. The only compensation was the sight of a water-ouzel in a rocky pool. If ever there were two travelers who deserved the appellation of "drowned rats," we were those two travelers, when, after hours of stumbling and splashing, we at last reached the point where the little torrent plunged down into the Finlay.

However, we built a roaring fire a mile farther up the river, pitched the tent, ate supper, and proceeded to dry ourselves out. I stripped off my wet clothes down to the skin, and did not put them on again until they were dry; as a result, I spent a reasonably comfortable night, snuggled down in my blanket sleeping-bag. Joe vainly tried to dry his garments on his body, with the result that he remained wet and cold throughout the night, though we kept a big fire going.

Next morning it was still raining and gloomy, and, what was almost equally discouraging, we did not know where we were. The Finlay at that point flowed between high, steep cliffs, and the water was so tumultuous that we felt confident we had reached the Canyon, but the Canyon is twenty miles long, and we were anxious to find the spot where the Huston party had had their cache, for above it lay Sheep Creek, and from the mouth of Sheep Creek ran an old trail to the hunting country. Thinking that the creek we had descended might be Sheep Creek, Joe set out on a tour back into the bush to look for the trail, while I descended the cliff to the

river to fish for arctic trout. I caught no fish, but half a mile or so up the river I came in sight of an immense, ragged boulder, "big as a house," lying in the middle of the stream, and as the Huston people had mentioned such a boulder as having been near their cache, I knew that I had succeeded in locating our position. After going somewhat farther up, I found their camp site and also their cache.

The country along the river was so rough and so thickly covered with a terrific tangle of down timber that it was perfectly evident that to reach our cache and bring up the canoe would require several days, so we finally concluded to set out for the hunting-grounds with what we had and to trust to luck to see us through. As luck had not been kind to us recently, this decision to attempt to live off the country was hardly a cautious one, for our grub supply was already reduced to not to exceed five days' supply. We knew that the Huston party had required three days to get to the hunting country. If we reached it in the same length of time, we would have two days' full rations on which to hunt, and if we killed nothing, we would be compelled to make our way back to the cache on empty stomachs. It will be seen that there was a possibility of our being obliged to test the merits of fasting for a considerable period.

I confess that the prospect caused me considerable worry, not so much over the possibility of going hungry as of being once more obliged to turn back empty-handed.

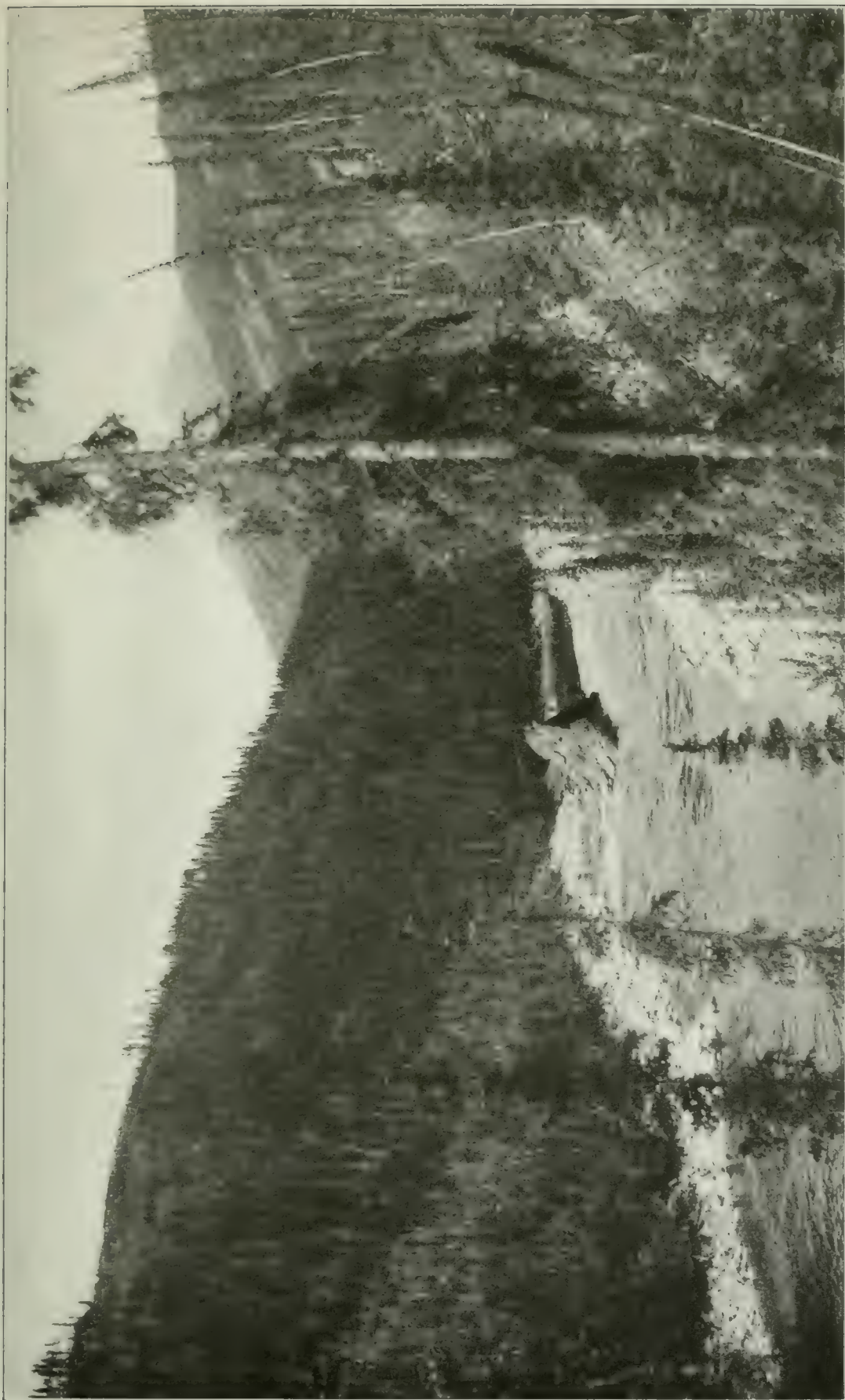
Toward noon the weather cleared a bit, and after a hasty lunch we set out. At the Huston cache—a plat-



form elevated on four posts—we left two cupfuls of flour and corn-meal for use on the return journey. From thence to the mouth of Sheep Creek was hardly more than half a mile in a direct line, but the ground was so broken by slides and so thickly covered with a tangle of down timber that it took us a full hour to reach it. We had already seen numerous old goat tracks and places where stubs and low-hanging limbs had pulled out long tufts of white wool, and we saw still more evidences of old Oreamnos along the brink of the gorge of Sheep Creek. These signs rather surprised me, for I had always thought of the mountain-goat as sticking pretty close to bare summits, yet here was a spot he frequented miles from a bare mountain top, and thickly overgrown with timber and bushes. Doubtless he felt at home there because the steep cliffs of the Canyon afforded him a refuge in case of danger.

The walls of the Sheep Creek gorge were completely impassable, so we had to descend once more to the Finlay. While we rested at the mouth of the stream I once more tried fishing, but though the spot was a most favorable one, and I saw several big arctics, I could not get a single rise—another instance, it seemed to me, of the ill luck that was pursuing us. Half a dozen trout at that time would have been most acceptable.

It was some consolation that when we began to climb out of the Finlay gorge we discovered a trail whose width showed that it had evidently been used years before by pack-horses. That horses had at some time been brought into the country we had concluded earlier in the day,



"I CAME IN SIGHT OF AN IMMENSE, RAGGED BOULDER, 'BIG AS A HOUSE.'"





for we had found the skull of such an animal not far from our camp. It was a new experience to be following a travelled way, and though several times the trail became so faint that we were obliged to search for it, we never failed to find the old blazes and the path. There were half-obliterated boot marks in soft places, and these we judged had been made by the Huston party. A mile or so up the slope we found pieces of tin-foil, and several of the pictures that go with packages of a certain brand of milk chocolate.

"They have already begun to feel the work," said Joe, "and are shovelling in coal."

"It will be lucky if they took along a good supply," said I, "for then we shall be finding traces that will make us certain that we are on the right trail."

The picture on the cards was of the relief expedition sent out to find the ill-fated Captain Scott. We hoped there was nothing ominous in it!

The trail so heartened us that we made great progress along it, particularly when we reached the level of a high, winding mountain valley through which it ran for a long distance. When we camped late that afternoon, we reckoned that we must have made ten miles. We had already passed the headwaters of Sheep Creek and had reached another small stream that flowed in the direction we were travelling. The valley in places along this creek was open meadow, in places muskeg, while to eastward rose the foot-hills of the range we had left, bald hills covered with bunch-grass.

By eleven o'clock next day we reached a broader

valley where our stream joined another larger one coming from the northeast. The valley seemed to break right through the range, and to furnish a low pass to the Fox River country. The valley was wide and marshy and overgrown with grass and willows, forming an ideal spot for moose. That it was a good place for game was borne out by signs of old Siwash camps. Our route now turned down the valley toward the west and passed a number of small lakes. Several times we lost the trail, but we always managed to find it again, and repeatedly we discovered more discarded chocolate coverings, showing that we were still following the route of the Huston party. We also saw along the trail boot marks that I knew were much too recent to have been made by that party—already out a full month—but Joe, whose ability to read signs of this sort was astonishingly poor, persisted in saying they were older than they looked.

In the afternoon we were much surprised to come in sight of a cabin standing at the edge of the valley. It had a rude porch in front, an elevated cache to one side, and on the roof were the wooden trees of two ancient pack-saddles. Evidently we were getting far enough to the west to be within reach of travel from Telegraph Creek on the Stickine. On the door were written in pencil the names of the Huston party. On opening the door, which was not even latched, one of the first objects we beheld was a big, bushy-tailed rat, or pack-rat, on a beam. There was a double bunk but seemingly no belongings of value except a bunch of traps

lying on top of the grub-box. I took these off, opened the lid, and looked in.

"Why, Joe," I exclaimed, "it's full of grub!"

Together we peered into the box, which contained a slab of bacon and several small neat sacks full of food. From the feel we could tell that there was sugar, beans, flour, rice, and dried apples.

"It must be left-over stuff from last spring," said Joe.

I opened the dried-apple sack and took two or three pieces out. "These are too fresh for that," said I, showing him the apples.

The thought flashed through my head that the Huston party must have left the food, but then I remembered the fresh tracks we had seen along the trail, and we both agreed that some trapper must have come into the region and was distributing his grub supply.

We would have given a good deal for a few pounds of that food. If we had been actually hungry we would, of course, have taken some of it, in accordance with the custom of the country, leaving some money in payment. But we could not help remembering that the trapper who had brought it in must have done so at the expenditure of a great deal of work, and we realized that if the next February or March his supply should run short, it would be cold comfort for him to feel in his pocket the silver we might leave in payment for anything we might take. Ultimately we decided not to take any of the food, but, in case we should be starving on the way out, to make use of some of it. If we had



known the real facts about that grub—but of this I shall have something to say later.

Beyond the cabin the trail for some miles was the best we had yet seen. Then we came to extensive burns and not only lost it but had bad going. We crossed two rushing creeks flowing down from the mountains on our right. Sunset found us in a dry muskeg, thinly sprinkled with small spruce, both living and dead, and we made a good camp, with plenty of dry wood. We had long since lost the trail, and with it all traces of the Huston party, but we had seen some old tracks of caribou, and Joe had shot a fool hen, which we used as a foundation for a little mulligan.

I think that here is a good place to confess that for two or three days I had been feeling downhearted. It was one of the times when I felt, as I had expected to feel, that if the good Lord would get me safely home once more, I would never again set out on such a wild-goose chase. Luck had run so steadily against us that in these pessimistic moments I definitely concluded that no matter what efforts I might make I was destined to return home with no other trophy of my journey than the skin of one brown bear, and, as Joe had nailed this up on the side of the storehouse at Grahame—much lower than I had advised—I half expected that the Siwash huskies would have torn it down and chewed it up.

That I felt thus depressed was due no doubt to my being weary, worn out, and hungry. For several days, in order to conserve our scanty stock of food, I had been stinting myself—a proceeding that proved most discour-

aging, for it seemed that the less I ate and the lighter our supplies became the more Joe consumed. Great as are his merits, Joe is not the man to take on a trip where there exists a prospect of the grub supply failing!

Thinking the whole matter over, I half concluded that I might have had a better time if I had taken my vacation at some big summer hotel where there were plenty of ladies, electric lights, and where the guests dressed for dinner. The thought of the dinners I was missing was both fascinating and provoking. To have been able to sit down to even one of them I would willingly have donned my claw-hammer coat any number of times!

But such are some of the drawbacks of roughing it in the wilderness. Elsewhere I have compared the mountains to a woman. If one is fortunate enough to enjoy her favors, he ought to be able now and then to endure her frowns.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AN OPPORTUNE MEETING WITH A BEAR

TEN o'clock next day found us seated on a steep mountainside on the brink of a cliff that bounded a basin. We did not know exactly where we were going, but Huston's rough map seemed to indicate that we should turn northeastward in this locality, and we had done so. We hoped that when we reached the summit the hunting-grounds would at last lay revealed before us, though we had an uneasy feeling that perhaps they lay in a range we saw farther ahead—so distant that I knew in my heart we would never reach them. The going up the mountain had been both steep and rough, and both of us were winded and weary. For days I had been travelling on will rather than physical strength, and even the will was about exhausted. I actually had begun to doubt whether my tortured leg muscles could be made to drag me up to the yet distant summit.

Before and beneath us there unfolded another magnificent panorama. Far away and much below us lay the Finlay and the gorge of the Long Canyon, while to our right spread out the pond-studded valley of Porcupine Creek flowing down from the north. Beyond the valley loomed the many, forbidding, snow-capped peaks of the range that I had begun to call the Kitchener Mountains, while yet farther away, very far away in-



deed, we could see the bold cliffs of the Cassiars. Even the basin beneath us was a spectacle well worth beholding. At the head and on the sides it was hemmed in by cliffs, and it ended far below in a sea of green forest. In places the floor of the basin was carpeted with grass, interspersed with heaps of slide rock and clumps of bushes.

As we had been toiling up the edge of the basin for an hour or more, my interest in the spectacle had waned, and I was sitting in a sort of lethargy when Joe crept close to me and whispered eagerly:

“There’s a bear over yonder!”

Galvanized into life, I looked in the direction his finger indicated and saw instantly that he was not mistaken. At the foot of one of the cliffs, near the head of the basin and well toward the opposite side, on a little slope covered with blueberry-bushes, there was a black bear. He was busy eating berries, and his glossy hair rippled beautifully in the wind. We slunk down on the cliff top and lay watching him. We were both desperately anxious to kill that bear. We needed him!

“How far is he?” I whispered.

“Four or five hundred yards,” said Joe.

It was too far to take a chance when so much was at stake, and we looked round to find a way of getting closer. Farther up the rim of the basin a sort of cliff peninsula projected out some distance. We clambered down the cliff on which we lay and scrambled over slide rock to that point of vantage. We had hoped to find ourselves in good shooting distance, but when we peered

over the edge bruin still appeared a long way off, four hundred yards at least. I looked at him through my rifle sights, and the front bead just about covered his whole body. Now four hundred yards is not such a desperately long distance to shoot at a target, but it is a long distance on a mountainside when you are not sure that it may not be five hundred or three hundred, and when eating or going hungry depends upon your hitting the mark!

Eagerly we looked around for some route that would bring us closer. There seemed to be no practical one. If we tried to descend into the basin and sneak nearer, we would certainly be heard. A *détour* to the top of the cliff below which the bear was feeding would take a full hour, and besides the wind was unfavorable. For the time, therefore, we did nothing and simply lay there on the cliff watching him and hoping he would come nearer.

Though it was late in the day for a bear to be feeding, he still seemed to be very hungry; through my glasses I could see him gobbling down blueberries, stems and all, like a champion pie eater at a county fair. By and by he apparently thinned out the supply on that slope, for he moved twenty or thirty yards toward us to another, but this evidently proved disappointing, for he remained there only two or three minutes and fed back toward the first.

The suspense of waiting was very trying to me, and I discussed with Joe the practicability of making a short *détour* up the rim, climbing down into the basin, and

trying to sneak closer behind the point of a projecting cliff. I was eager but calm enough and had my nerves well enough under control, but Joe seemed to think I did not, for he kept saying:

“Don’t get excited! Don’t get excited!”

He needed the advice himself, for just after he had uttered the words for about the third or fourth time——

“Bang!” rang out a shot. “Spat!” went a bullet against a cliff a hundred feet perhaps from the bear, and “Bang!” in diminuendo came the echo from the cliffs across the basin.

Joe had been keeping his rifle—he did not know it—at full cock, and happening unconsciously to tighten his finger on the trigger, the weapon had responded as described. At that moment I could cheerfully have kicked him off the cliff and emptied five soft-nosed .401 bullets into his carcass, but I contented myself with an expletive or two and turned my attention to the bear.

I saw a most interesting sight. The animal had been totally unaware of our presence, nor had he yet made us out. He had heard merely the report of the rifle, the spat of the bullet, and the echoes, and he was badly confused. For a few moments he stood perfectly still, and then ran right in our direction for perhaps thirty yards, and hid in a little patch of brush about the size of a small room. His behavior throws light on many alleged “charges” made by bears whose only thought is of escape.

For several minutes he remained in the bushes out of sight; then sneaked out on the other side and set off as



if he had selected a destination and meant to reach it. It was clear that the time had come to shoot, and, because of our urgent need of meat we had already agreed that both should fire. My Lyman sight was set at 350 yards. Lying prone on the cliff top, with my elbows resting firmly on the rock, I was most favorably stationed for a shot, and when the bear paused for a second, broad-side on, I took a short but careful aim and pulled the trigger. He lurched down in his hindquarters, then recovered himself and started off down-hill at a considerable pace, but we clearly saw that I had broken his left hind leg. Joe fired twice in quick succession, and when the animal paused once more, I once more let drive, and again Joe pulled trigger. At my shot the beast seemed to collapse, so to speak, yet again he pulled himself together and, half running, half sliding, down a steep slope, disappeared in a thicket of scrubby birch and poplar bushes.

I was confident that, wounded as he was, he could not climb the slope, but thought it possible that he might make off down the basin, so I left Joe on the cliff to keep watch, while I hastily took off my heavy boots and scrambled down the cliff into the basin below the bear. Then I cautiously crept up to the thicket and into it, being careful to make sure that I knew what was within a radius of twenty or thirty feet, for I thought it barely possible that, wounded as he was, the beast might pluck up enough courage to charge. To tell the truth, I rather hoped he would, for I knew that with the heavy automatic I could easily stop him, whereas I was not sure



Reproduced from a photograph by M. B. Huston.

HUSTON PARTY ON WAY UP MOUNTAINS.



"HE WAS A FINE, FAT, BLACK BEAR."





that if he made off in the opposite direction he might not get away. Presently, however, above and to the right, I saw a spot where the grass was bent down as if by some animal dragging over it, and both grass and earth were copiously sprinkled with frothy red blood—the sure sign of a lung shot. Following this trail a few yards, I found the bear lying dead against the trunk of a sapling. A sort of bellow he had uttered as I was descending the cliff had evidently been his death-cry.

He was a fine, fat, black bear, not too old, and his coat for the fall was unusually fine. When we came to examine him closely, we found that two bullets had struck him. One had hit his left thigh, tearing the muscles badly and shattering the bone. The other had penetrated his left front leg, had passed out under the armpit, had entered the body, and had passed out on the other side. When Joe had examined these holes, he said:

“Of course, you hit him in the leg, but that bullet hole in the shoulder looks like one from my .30-30.”

I felt sure, from the bear's behavior, that my second bullet had gone home, and I saw that the entrance hole was plenty big enough to admit a .401. We did not argue the matter, however, but after we had the skin mostly off I set out down the basin for some water—a long, hard job, for I had to descend at least a thousand feet—leaving Joe to finish skinning the animal and cut it up. When I returned he handed me the outside casing of a bullet he had found in the bear's body cavity. It was from a .401. I shall not pretend to deny that I

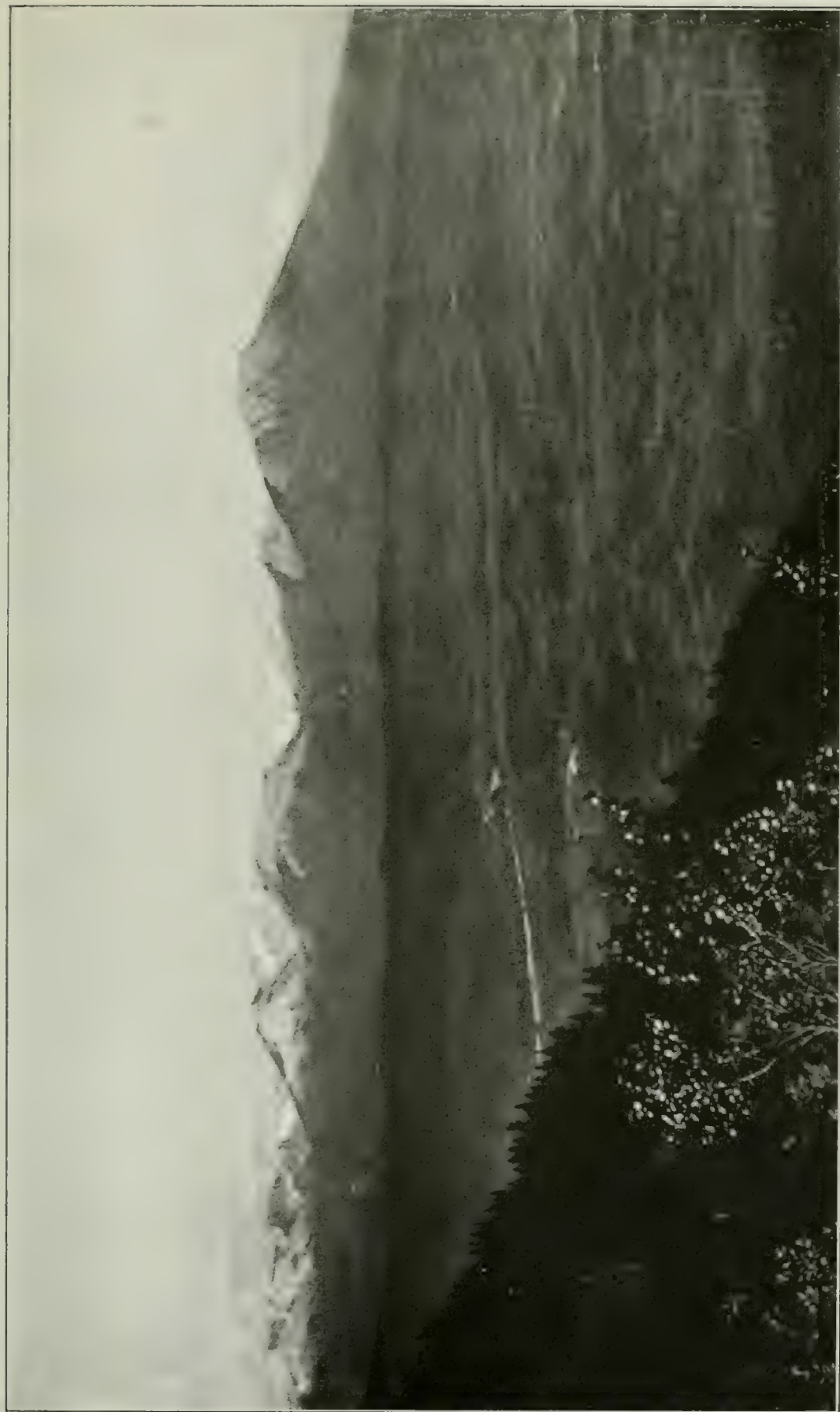
felt happy it was so, the more, perhaps, because of the fiasco with the goat.

The beast was certainly what our trapper friend, Scott, on Parsnip River, would call "a ripe bear." He was as fat as a prize pig, and from him we later rendered out enough lard to last us back to Finlay Forks, though we used only a little of the fat at that. As we were famishing for meat, we soon had some steaks sizzling in the pan, and we ate and ate and ate—panful after panful, as fast as it would fry.

For me it was a most delightful day. Luck had changed at last. The bear had saved the situation. I not only had the beast to my credit, but we now had an abundance of meat and could hunt the region indefinitely.

It was mid-afternoon before we finally set out once more toward the summit. We were weighted down, not only with the old contents of our packs, but with the bearskin and an abundance of meat. The slope was exceedingly steep, fifty degrees at least, and the sun was near to setting when we at last reached the crest.

A pleasant prospect lay before us. The mountain on which we stood sloped down a few hundred feet to a high Alpine valley, partly overgrown with balsam-trees, but with large grassy areas also. Beyond rose a loftier range of mountains, the summits of which were craggy and rugged to the last degree, but the slopes of which were delightfully smooth and covered with grass. Here and there, both up and down the range, lay fine big basins, and in one of them gleamed a tiny lakelet.



THE FINLAY VALLEY AND THE KITCHENER MOUNTAINS FROM WHERE I SHOT THE BLACK BEAR.





On the slope of the mountain directly opposite I noted a patch of green herbage that contrasted strongly with the dead brown of most of the grass and that evidently marked the spot where a tiny rill took its rise. The patch was fully two miles away, and the light was beginning to fail, yet it seemed to me that I could discern some tiny objects, no bigger than small bugs, moving about on it. I trained my glasses on the patch and saw that I had made no mistake. Four or five whitish animals were grazing on the slope, one of them considerably darker than the rest. Whether they were goats or sheep I could not be sure; beyond question they were game.

It seemed that at last we had reached the happy hunting-grounds!

## CHAPTER XVII

### STONE'S MOUNTAIN-SHEEP

It was too late to go after the animals I had seen on the mountainside opposite, so we hurried down into the valley to make camp before nightfall. Joe wanted to camp beside the lakelet, where we would have been in full view of a large part of the region, but I promptly vetoed this harebrained idea, for I was determined to take no chances of alarming game. Instead, I selected a spot in the valley in a grove of balsam. A little brook ran near by, sometimes above the ground, sometimes beneath it, furnishing a plentiful supply of clear, cold water, while there were a number of dead trees for firewood. As I expected to remain here for some time, I cut an extra large supply of balsam boughs and made the softest beds of the whole trip.

That night and again next morning we filled up on fried bear-steak, and after tacking up the bear hide on two trees that grew conveniently close together near the tent, we set off with the rifles and cameras to investigate the slope on which the afternoon before we had seen the wild animals. When we got to timber-line we examined the slope carefully through our glasses. At first we saw nothing, and Joe had given over looking, but by and by I caught sight of a slight movement not far from the green patch, and presently I made out the back of some



animal. From where we lay the slope looked almost perfectly level, but it was clear that there was a slight depression where I saw the animal. The beast disappeared for a bit, then reappeared with two others, though we could see only a little of any of them. The color of the one I saw most clearly was such that I thought possible the thing was a caribou; then I caught sight of a set of spiral horns, and I knew that what I beheld were mountain-sheep. Whether the animals had remained in that place all night, or whether they had slept upon the cliffs and then had returned in the early morning we could not know; all we did know was that there they were and that it was our problem to get them.

But how? The wind, to be sure, was favorable, but the spot the sheep had selected was on a level, grassy mountainside, hundreds of yards from any appreciable cover. Joe declared flatly that it would be impossible to get within good shooting distance.

"You are always in too much of a hurry," he said, referring probably to my precipitancy with the goats.

For an hour or so we watched the animals and studied the slope from several different points. I expected any minute for them to start up the mountain, and it was clear that if they once got upon the cliffs our chance of killing them would be small. From a little to our left a shallow gully ran up the mountain, gradually broadening out into level ground about four hundred yards below the sheep. Studying the slope intently through my glasses, I thought I perceived a possibility of following up this gully as far as it went, and then

making an approach behind a small swell that rose four or five feet above the general level of the slope to the right of and a little below the animals. I explained the plan to Joe, told him that I meant to make the trial, and left him. His silence was eloquent of his disapproval and of his belief that I would fail.

I resolved, however, to neglect no precaution. I took plenty of time, even to making the walk up the gully; arrived at the end of it, I rested a bit to steady my nerves and reconnoitre and to pull off my boots. By taking advantage of a clump of low juniper I managed to crawl from the gully and get behind the swell and thence worm my way up the slope. I felt horribly exposed, and knew that if one of the animals should move a few yards in any direction I would certainly be discovered. Joe said afterward that once the biggest ram did, in fact, walk in my direction a bit and stand with head thrown back, scrutinizing the landscape. Joe thought that I had certainly been seen, but it was not so, for the ram walked back and lay down again.

Three-quarters of an hour, perhaps, after I started on the stalk I reached the lower edge of the little swell behind which I had made my approach, and I knew that I must not be more than a hundred yards from the animals. I felt that only a stroke of desperately bad luck could now prevent me from obtaining at least a fair running shot. Again I rested until my pulse was running normal. I did not want to boggle the affair now, for it was by no means certain that I would have another chance at sheep; the Huston party had seen



only two. And I was more eager to get a sheep than any other animal, except perhaps a grizzly. Slowly I crept up the little swell till I had almost reached its highest point, and again I rested. I had decided that it would be better simply to rise up than to attempt to crawl in sight of the animals, for the swell was so round and nearly level that the sheep would almost certainly have seen me before I could have seen them. Quietly I rose part way up, only to discover that I was as yet not quite far enough. Once more I edged myself closer, rested again, rose to my feet.

Forty yards ahead, half hidden in a hollow behind some weeds and grass, stood what seemed to be a young ram. I quickly fired for his shoulder. The bullet seemed to paralyze the beast in his tracks, but he did not fall; as I afterward ascertained, the missile had struck a trifle too low to be immediately fatal. I took no chances but, almost as quickly as I could pull trigger again, sent in another bullet that brought him down. Then I whirled to the left where, through the tail of my eye, I had caught sight of a commotion. Forty yards from the first animal and perhaps seventy from me three other sheep had sprung to their feet from a little hollow, and I saw that one was a good-sized ram. He started to run, but before he had gathered any headway I caught him high in the hip and brought him to a standstill. Another bullet killed him.

The other sheep, a ewe and a young ram lamb, were so startled and terrified that they seemed completely crazed. They ran off some distance, then returned to



the top of a little rise, not fifty yards from where I stood by the bigger sheep, and stared down at me with big, wild eyes. I would have given a good deal for the camera at that moment, for their nearness and pose would have enabled me to obtain one of the grandest animal pictures ever taken, but when Joe came puffing and blowing up the mountainside with it, they ran off. They hung around, however, for some minutes, and I succeeded in taking a distant picture of them. Finally they circled far enough to get our wind and then made their way up the mountain, and we saw them no more.

The animals whose careless watch had led to the death of two of their number were Stone's sheep (*ovis stonei*). These creatures are the most southern species of the northern sheep and, in a way, form a sort of connecting-link between the ordinary bighorns of the United States and southern Canada, and the whiter sheep farther north. The gap between Stone's sheep and the ordinary bighorn is, however, much more pronounced than that between Stone's sheep and Fannin's sheep or even Dall's sheep; in fact, these northern species seem gradually to merge into one another. The color of the Stone's sheep varies with the locality, with the sexes, and even with individuals. The back, sides, and the fronts of the legs of my bigger ram were a dark brown in color, with a few scattered grayish hairs interspersed; except for these hairs, the color was not unlike that of the ordinary bighorn. The backs of the legs, the belly, and the rump patch were a dirty white; the diminutive tail was almost black,



OUR CAMP IN THE BALSAM GROVE.



A STONE'S SHEEP.





and the neck and head were iron-gray, the head almost white. The ewe appeared to be practically white almost all over, except for a black tail. Both the slain animals were large, the bigger weighing probably two hundred and forty pounds, but neither had very large horns, for neither was yet very old. Close by where they fell I picked up a considerably larger horn that had probably belonged to a ram killed by the Indians some years before.

We took the skin of the larger sheep entire (and, of course, the head), for I was under the impression that no complete specimens of sheep had been taken out of that country, and I knew that for years the American Biological Survey had been making a careful study of the distribution and characteristics of mountain-sheep, partly in the hope of throwing light upon evolution and the origin of species. On my return home I learned from Mr. E. A. Preble that the Survey had no record of sheep having been found in the vicinity in which I had killed these. Later I sent the skin and head to the Survey for examination and comparison by Mr. Preble and Mr. E. W. Nelson, both authorities on sheep. Mr. Preble writes me that the ram is very similar to one collected by Mr. Vreeland near Laurier Pass, among the minor differences being that the back and shoulder of my specimen are somewhat browner and the sides of the cheek and neck more flecked with iron-gray.

From the smaller sheep we took the horns and a portion of the skull, and from both animals we cut the best of the meat. In the next two days we devoted

much time to caring for our trophies and to drying meat. The sheep and bear skins had to be scraped, the fat removed, and the skins stretched out to dry. Fortunately the weather was clear and the sun hot, so that the drying was quickly and well done. The bighorn skull had to be denuded of flesh and brains—no small task of itself. We cut a great deal of the meat into strips and hung it on a rack that we rigged up in front of the tent, where it would catch the sun and also receive some smoke and heat from the fire. Meat dried in this way will last indefinitely, and though the flavor is not much to boast of, the meat is nourishing and goes well in mulligans and similar concoctions. For my people at home I dried a few pounds of both sheep and bear, according to the receipt given by Hornaday; that is, I first rubbed on the meat a mixture of black pepper, allspice, and salt, after which I dried the strips in the sun.

We were no longer in danger of hunger. We had great heaps of meat. When we tired of sheep meat we tried bear meat; we had both in every style—fried, roasted, and boiled, and between meals I even stuck pieces on sticks before the fire and “siwashed” them. Meat was almost our sole diet, for we had only three or four cups of mixed corn-meal and flour, with plenty of salt and tea but no sugar. Each meal we ate a tiny piece of bannock and filled up on meat. The amount of meat that a healthy man will consume under such circumstances is unbelievable. I am afraid to tell how much we ate, but I will say that after this experience I ceased to doubt stories I had heard of half a dozen





"THE CAMP ROBBERS, OR CANADA JAYS, FOUND OUR MEAT-RACK IRRESISTIBLY ATTRACTIVE."



THE GORGE OF SHEEP CREEK.





hungry Siwash consuming a whole caribou in a single night.

My only regret was that we had not had some of this luck up the Quadacha. Then we would have reached the glacier !

We were not alone in the feasting. The camp-robbers, or Canada jays, found our meat-rack irresistibly attractive. There were dozens of them squawking round the camp, and not only did they gorge themselves full, but they carried off pieces of meat and cached them for future reference. Troublesome as these birds are, they almost gain one's admiration by their very impudence.

After an early supper on the day we killed the sheep we climbed to the basin that contained the lakelet, and found a few old caribou tracks, but no recent signs of game of any sort. The spot was a wonderfully picturesque one, for the water was clear as crystal, while on three sides the black cliffs rose sheer for thousands of feet. We lingered there until sunset and on the homeward way sat down on a high ridge and watched the pink sky fade behind the hundred miles of jagged peaks that form the Kitchener Range. It has been my fortune to see a few sublime sights in nature's picture-gallery, and this was one of them.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WE BUILD A RAFT AND RUN PART OF THE LONG CANYON

ONE fact at least I learned from this trip to Peace River headwaters: by the time one has travelled five or six hundred miles by canoe, much of it up-stream, and has toiled over the mountains for weeks with a heavy pack-sack he is so tired and worn out that he has neither the strength nor the ambition to hunt very hard. After killing the Stone's sheep as described in the last chapter we examined the country round, but saw no other game. There were old caribou tracks about the lakelet and elsewhere, but the animals themselves had either migrated on account of the change of season, or else had been scared out of the country by the Huston party. We had hoped that the carcasses of the sheep might attract a grizzly, but they did not, and lack of sign led us to conclude that there were few bears of any sort in the region.

By moving camp farther up the range we probably could have found caribou or other game, but we already had all the trophies we could carry, and the addition of a caribou head would have meant another trip—a matter of ten days at least. In view of the time of year this would be a serious matter, for though the weather had been reasonably good thus far, and we were able, by



keeping a fire going, to make ourselves reasonably comfortable at night, there was no knowing when a blizzard might strike down and render the task of getting out extremely disagreeable at best. Already the summits of the mountains were blanketed with a white pall, most of the summer birds had long since departed, and long strings of ducks and geese from the lonely lakes and fens of the farther north were streaming southward across the sky. Furthermore, I was a bit fed up on slaughter, and the sight of so much meat rotting on the mountainsides dulled the edge of my desire for the chase. When we felt fairly rested from our strenuous labors of the past weeks we decided to set out on the return, thinking that I would probably have a chance at a bear or a moose along the rivers on the long way out.

The way was long indeed. We figured that we were twenty-seven miles at least from the canyon, while from there by river to our canoe and cache was about twenty-three miles more. Fifty miles in a civilized country does not seem far, but here it was another matter, and we expected to be a week or thereabouts in reaching once more the longed-for supplies in our cache. After that would come the canoe voyage down the Finlay, down Peace River through the mountains, around the great Canyon, and from Hudson's Hope to rail-head at Peace River Crossing—weeks of steady paddling. Even Joe had never taken such a trip, and he remarked that it was "a long way to Tipperary!"

A day's hard travel by a shorter route brought us to

an old Siwash camp on a bluff overlooking the creek on which stood the trapper's cabin. We stopped at this cabin and, as the bunch of traps that had been on top of the grub-box was gone, we knew that the trapper had been back that way; in fact, we saw his fresh tracks. The grub had not been disturbed, and we felt so weary of a practically straight meat diet that we took enough flour to make a big bannock, leaving in exchange some tea and four small cans of dehydrated cranberries and dehydrated onions, together with a note explaining our plight and the reason for making the exchange. We wondered a good deal who this trapper could be and whence he had come, nor did we ever learn, but I feel sure he must have entered the country by way of Telegraph Creek on the Stickine.

Soon after we camped I crept out to the edge of the bluff overlooking the marshy bottom, and had been there hardly a minute when I saw a moose stick its head out of the spruce woods on the other side and take a look over the meadow. After surveying the scene for a minute or two it withdrew its head and I could catch occasional glimpses of it walking among the low spruce just beyond the edge of the marsh. Two or three times it reappeared at the edge to reconnoitre, and I could not but admire the craft it displayed in looking for enemies before venturing out on its feeding-ground. Finally it seemed to become convinced that the coast was clear, for it stepped from the woods into the open, and was quickly hidden from view in a fringe of willows that grew along the creek.

The animal was nearly half a mile away, but even at that distance I could see that it was very large. I was particularly struck with the size of the "bell," but the creature moved so quickly in the open that I was unable to make out anything about its horns. From the size of the animal and of the "bell," however, I assumed that it was a bull.

Dusk was already falling, and it was useless to try to hunt the animal that evening. However, we had decided to rest a day at this place, and I watched the marsh next morning, but without result. At three o'clock in the afternoon I made my way to a timbered "island" in the marsh and hid myself on a little hill about three hundred yards from the point where the moose appeared the evening before. The place commanded not only a view of the marsh for a long distance, but also of the pass leading toward Fox River and of the mountains on either side of it. These mountains are exceedingly rugged, and their summits are either bare, black rock or else are covered with dwarf shrubs. On the lower slopes groves of poplars, touched by the autumnal frosts, glowed like vast beds of yellow tulips, while the leaves on the shrubs had been transformed to a magnificent bronze color. Even yet the spectacle rises vivid before me: the yellow poplars, the bronze shrubbery, the wide pass, and the black cliffs of the peaks on either side. How glorious, to be sure, are the pictures preserved on the film of memory!

It was clear to me now that had we kept on up the Fox River range instead of turning down to the Long



Canyon we would have reached this pass, though we would have met with great difficulties on the way, for the summits were exceedingly rugged. The mountains on which I had killed the sheep and the bear were merely a continuation beyond the pass of the Fox River range.

For half an hour or so the only incident to break the monotony of my watch was the sight of a hawk chasing a small duck; from the speed of the duck I concluded that the only thing the hawk would get out of the pursuit was exercise. I did not expect to see the moose until late in the afternoon, and was, therefore, rather surprised, on scrutinizing the patch of willows where the animal had disappeared the preceding day, to catch a glimpse of the beast moving about. There were really only a few willows, small and scattered, yet so sinuous and crafty was the animal that for long intervals I was unable, even from my elevation, to see it at all, and it was fully half an hour before I got a good look at its head. When I finally did so I experienced keen disappointment. Despite its size and the big "bell," the animal was hornless! Instead of a bull the moose was merely an unusually big cow with an unusually big bell.

I could easily have shot the animal, for it was hardly two hundred yards distant, and by and by it wandered still nearer, cropping willows. Had I been vouchsafed the same opportunity on the way out, I am afraid I would have embraced it, but now we had plenty of meat and the thing was not to be thought of. I tried to secure a picture of the animal, but she kept so carefully to the cover of the willows that in this, too, I was disappointed.

For a long time she waded about in the thicket, then finally worked her way behind the projecting point of another island, and I saw her no more.

Why, I want to ask here, are these northwestern moose practically voiceless? On neither of my trips to that region have I heard a moose bellow, and trappers tell me that these moose rarely call. Yet they seem to be identical with the eastern moose, and the eastern bulls make the woods resound in the rutting season.

That night we were favored—not for the first time—with a magnificent display of the aurora borealis. As I watched the shifting, uncanny shafts of light in the cold northern sky it occurred to me that the Crees were very apt when they called the phenomenon “the dance of the spirits.”

A watch in the cold, frosty air next morning proved unproductive, so we set off for the Long Canyon, which we reached about five o'clock in the afternoon, and rejoiced when we found our little bag of flour and meal untouched. The only incident worthy of remark on the trip was the sight of a fresh sheep wallow and fresh sheep tracks on the brink of the gorge of Sheep Creek, not two hundred yards from the Finlay.

Some distance above the Long Canyon the Finlay bends to the southward again and takes its rise in Thutade Lake. So far as I am aware, only three parties of white men have ever ascended the river above the Long Canyon: Finlay's party, McConnell's party, and a certain Billy Hedges, a trapper and prospector, who was accompanied by one or two companions. McConnell



got only as far as the "Fishing Lakes," where he found many moose. He attributes the number of animals in that locality to the fact that the Siwash have a superstitious dread of the country; those who accompanied him could hardly be prevailed upon to enter its precincts. At Grahame one of the Indians drew in the sand for McConnell's edification a sketch of a footprint he declared he had seen, and it was fully three feet long. Later one of the Indians deserted rather than face the reputed monsters.

Both Finlay and Hedges got as far as Thutade Lake. When Hedges came out three years ago he brought with him three grizzly cubs, which he named Romeo, Juliet, and Seton. Seton died, but the other two grew up to bearhood. When Hedges enlisted and went to the war, he sold his pets to a menagerie.

At the Long Canyon we were only about twenty-three miles from our cache and canoe, but the going by land was wretchedly bad, owing to rough country and burned timber, and we reckoned that it would take us about three days of hard labor to make the trip. We were both anxious to get to the cache, partly to assure ourselves of its safety, but mainly because we were hankering for some of its contents.

"The first thing I shall open when we get there is that pot of jam," I said that night as we sat before our fire on a shelf of the canyon wall. This statement was remarkable because at home I rarely eat jam. I presume that my appetite for it now was due to the fact that for more than a week we had been



without sugar or sweets of any sort except a few bars of milk chocolate.

A grin lit up Joe's dusky features. "I was just thinking of that jam myself," he said.

"Hot cakes with some of that maple syrup will go pretty well, too," I continued.

"I want some of those beans," declared Joe.

The prospect of waiting three days before we could reach the delectable jam and other desirable delicacies did not appeal to us. Furthermore, we were weary of carrying those heavy packs over rough country, and were desperate enough for anything. Ever since reaching the Canyon the first time, we had vaguely spoken of building a raft and running down the river. We now definitely decided to do so. To be sure, we knew next to nothing about the water in that stretch of the stream, except that it was very rough, but we knew that the Huston party had managed to get this far with boats. It was true that they might have made several portages in doing so, but the rapids and whirlpools could go hang! We were going to have that jam and to have it the very next evening!

When we came to take itemized stock of our materials for raft-building, we found that we had eight ten-penny nails, which I had been carrying in my sack, a few bits of twine, the straps on our pack-sacks, and some medicated gauze! We also picked up a few feet of old, half-rotten rope left by the Huston party, and we noticed that there were some nails in the Huston cache. Our only tool was a hatchet.

Bright and early next morning Joe found some dead spruce two or three hundred feet up the Canyon wall, and while he chopped five logs I made a mulligan, salvaged some nails from the Huston cache, and slid the logs down hill to a convenient beach below the cache. These things done, we assembled the logs on rollers at the edge of the water, with the two larger logs on the outside, and mortised in crosspieces at each end. These we nailed to the logs, and we also tied the logs to these crosspieces with our sundry straps, twine, rope, and twisted gauze! Finally I nailed on two transverse pieces to keep the logs from weaving back and forth. The great trouble was the weakness of the lashings and the shortness of the nails. Finally I cut two dry spruce poles, while Joe made some wonderful paddles, or sweeps, by nailing slabs of wood to some shorter poles.

It was after three o'clock in the afternoon before the good craft *Necessity* was launched and our belongings placed upon it, well wrapped in the balloon-silk tent. It hardly seemed possible that we could reach our canoe and cache before night fell, but the attraction of the jam was irresistible, and after I had taken two pictures we pushed off. In our hurry we left our biggest bag of dried meat, which we had lugged so far, lying upon the beach—to the joy, no doubt, of some coyote or bear.

The ride that followed was decidedly the most exhilarating it has ever been my good fortune to enjoy. We were immediately in rough water, and, past the first



"IT WAS THREE O'CLOCK . . . BEFORE THE GOOD CRAFT *NECESSITY* WAS LAUNCHED."





bend, we were caught by a whirlpool that whirled us round and round dizzily, reminding me of the ditty:

“Swing me around again, Willie,  
Don’t let my feet touch the ground!”

By dint of desperate work with our sweeps we got into the main current once more and went careering madly along between the black cliff walls. In some places we were able to find pole-bottom, in others we had to use our sweeps, but we generally managed to keep our craft reasonably straight. Our great concern was not to run upon a rock, of which there were many, for we knew that our craft was too frail to stand much pounding and would certainly go to pieces. Luckily the water was wonderfully clear, so that we could see hidden dangers remarkably well; in fact, it was so clear that repeatedly we thought ourselves in danger from rocks that really were far below the surface. We could only travel as fast as the current, but that carried us along at racing speed, and, as on Crooked River, we again felt, as we swept over the clear depths, the sensation of flying. The play of light on the parti-colored boulders that formed the bottom added greatly to the charm of the experience.

Though swells repeatedly dashed over our craft, we experienced little sense of danger. Was not each moment bringing us nearer the coveted pot of jam? The most ticklish moment came when we neared a long chute down which the river plunged at tremendous speed. We could see the rocks of the bottom as dis-

tinctly as if there had been no water there—almost more so—and doubted whether our craft would find clearance, but we headed her straight in and shot through without a scratch.

“This is the life!” exclaimed Joe, shaking the water off his boots, and we both laughed like schoolboys.

A few miles below our starting-point the walls of the canyon fell away, and on the left bank we saw the “Irish Cabin,” a deserted trapper’s shack that is a landmark in this region. From this point on the left bank is a continuous low flat reaching to the Fox River Mountains. On the right hand the mountains continue farther down, and around the head of Bower Creek, a swift stream that empties into the Finlay a couple of miles below Irish Cabin, there are some fine rugged peaks whose appearance bears out their reputation of being good for both sheep and caribou. If we had had our canoe and supplies at the mouth of this creek I should have liked to examine the country for a few days, but, as it was, we drifted by without stopping.

Below Bower Creek the river slowed down a bit but kept up a good pace everywhere and especially so in the ripples. The mountains on the right hand fell away, while the Fox River range began to loom nearer. We could see this range, the scene of earlier trials, for a long distance; its grass-covered slopes, its black peaks, and the golden mantle of frost-touched aspens that clothed its foot-hills made up a splendid spectacle. This range has thus far received no name, and I had come to call it the Joffre Range—after a very noble Frenchman.



From this point of vantage it was clear that we had climbed the range at about the worst place possible, and that if we had ascended the river some miles farther we would have had a much easier ascent and would have saved about a day's hard labor. Such is one of the penalties of penetrating a strange country without a guide.

When the sun set we were still miles from the steep slope of Prairie Mountain and the narrow gap through which the Finlay breaks its way to the great Intermontane Valley; we were both chilled to the bone, for the night was turning cold, but we were too near our goal to stop now; and just as the last feeble rays of light faintly crimsoned the white tops of the Kitchener Range behind us we swept through a final swift stretch of water and grounded our raft on the gravel-bar beneath our cache. We had floated twenty-three miles in a little more than three hours.

My first act was to leap ashore and run to the hiding-place of our canoe, and I felt relieved to find it safe. The cache, too, seemed undisturbed, and the jam was intact. It did not remain intact long!

## CHAPTER XIX

### BACK TO FINLAY FORKS

THAT night, full of jam and other delectable delicacies, we went to bed in Joe's big tent, with plenty of blankets both above and beneath us, but I confess that I did not sleep well. A couple of pack-rats had found our cache, and though they had done almost no damage beyond lugging off a piece of dried moose meat, they kept running over and through the tent in a most annoying manner. Repeatedly I lit a candle and put them to flight, only to have them come back and renew the performance about the time I was dozing off. These bold animals are a great pest to trappers, and their propensity for carrying off spoons, knives, cartridges, and other valuable articles, and bringing back in return spruce cones, sticks, and such things in exchange has caused them to be sometimes called "the traders of the North." Luckily they are not much given to gnawing into boxes or other similar receptacles. The one we saw in the cabin north of the Long Canyon had seemingly made no effort to get into the grub-box; an ordinary rat would have had a hole in it and all the contents devoured or spoiled long before. Despite my vigilance, the two that disturbed us managed to nibble a small hole in the ridge of my balloon-silk tent, which was lying on top of my bed.

Toward noon next day we began our long river journey, the terminus of which was Peace River Crossing, five hundred miles away. We found the Quadacha less white than when we had last seen it; evidently the freezing weather was diminishing glacial action. The Finlay below the junction was consequently clearer than when we had come up; it was also a couple of feet lower and the current was more moderate. The poplar and birch leaves had all been transformed by the Midas touch of frost and gave a golden tinge to the landscape. All day we had to fight a nasty, raw, head wind, but hour after hour we plied our dripping paddles, and the current helped us on. We made thirty miles before we camped, and by late the next afternoon we were once more at Deserter's Canyon. Two mighty loads apiece took over all our belongings except the canoe, and we slept that night at the lower end of the portage. Next morning we brought over the canoe, bade good-by to the now snow-crowned peak that stands sentinel over the canyon, and by eleven o'clock reached Shorty Webber's cabin. Although our progress had been slower than it would have been if the stream had been higher, we found that in about two hours' time we could undo a whole day's labor going up. The lowness of the stream had one great advantage, namely, that the water was less rough in the bad places; as it was, we shipped the tops of swells two or three times, notably in making the approach to the landing above Deserter's Canyon.

It was interesting to notice how Joe's spirits improved now that he was once more on the water. In



the mountains he had been morose and crabbed; now the shores resounded once more to the strains of "Molly MacIntyre." Like most French Canadians, Joe feels at home only on the river.

We expected to find Webber at home, but though a great heap of wood outside and the presence of his furniture and supplies inside the cabin bore evidence that he had been there, a note on the rough table informed us that he had returned to Fort Grahame. Generous Shorty! The note told us to help ourselves to anything we needed, and the good fellow had set out a profuse supply of dried moose meat where we could not fail to find it. Happily we were in need of nothing except a spoonful of baking-powder, which we took, but we were none the less grateful. The little man had his cabin ornamented with pictures cut from magazines and Sunday newspapers, and he had, wonder of wonders! a little phonograph and about half a dozen records. While we cooked and ate lunch we played them all. One of them was "Home, Sweet Home!" A phonograph seems an odd piece of furniture to find in a trapper's cabin at the back of beyond, but I presume that one really affords a great deal of company in the long winter evenings out there in the great snowy forest.

We reached Fort Grahame at 5.30, stopping on the way thither to see the Indian graveyard on the mountainside above the fort. The Indians have bestowed much more care on this graveyard, the spot they have selected for their eternal rest, than on their usual abodes. Most of the graves are covered with neat "chicken-coop"



INDIAN GRAVEYARD AT FORT GRAHAME.



GIBSON'S PLACE JUST ABOVE FINLAY FORKS.





structures, made of whip-sawed boards and painted green and white. A cross at the head of most of the graves indicates the nominal belief of those who rest beneath. The impression the spot made on me was sorrowful, particularly when I thought of the wildness of the place and the inevitable fate of the tribe who made it; yet I suppose the feeling was illogical. Surely the road to heaven is as short from that little graveyard on the lonely Finlay as it is from the crowded cemeteries that lie within sound of the roar of mighty cities.

Joe and Shorty Webber acted as cooks that night, and we all slept in Fox's cabin, the first roof I had slept under since leaving Prince George many weeks before. We remained awake far into the night, and Fox told us many stories of his long stay at Grahame, some of which I have already related. He also had for me the unwelcome intelligence that a Siwash husky had torn the hind leg off my brown bearskin. Joe was very indignant at the dog, but I suggested that the creature was merely acting according to his nature, and that perhaps the real fault lay in the man who had persisted in nailing the skin so low that the dog could reach it.

In our absence Fox had made a trip to the Forks, in order to vote in the provincial election. Eighteen ballots, as I remember it, had been cast at that polling-place, which is a fairly complete measure of the white population in the immense Parsnip and Finlay and upper Peace country. The returns had been sent to Hudson's Hope, a hundred miles down-stream, and when Fox left the Forks the general result was still unknown. The

Conservative candidate's election tour through the region had borne fruit, for he had received about three-fourths of the votes cast at the Forks. Much more interesting to me was the news that Roumania had thrown aside her neutrality and had entered the war on the side of civilization.

"Good-by and good luck!" we called to Fox and Shorty next morning when we had pushed out into the river.

"Good-by and good luck to you!" they echoed back.

I thought that both looked a bit wistful. We were going out into the Grand Pays once more, to the haunts of men, while they had before them a long and dreary winter remote from their kind. Fox's children were in some town on the coast of the Province, and this no doubt added to his loneliness. Shorty had hoped that Joe would return to keep him company in the country about Deserter's Canyon, and felt much disappointed when he learned that Joe meant to remain at Fort George. Now the little German would have no company except his dog and phonograph.

To oblige Fox we agreed to carry as far as Finlay Forks a fifty-pound sack of moosehide babiche for lacing snow-shoes, the babiche being destined for Fort St. John, where there are few moose. Beyond the Forks we could not promise to take it, for we had some more stuff of our own to take aboard there. Babiche, by the way, retails at from two to three dollars a pound.

Some miles below Grahame we met Ross, the freighter,



on a mission to the fort. He had come all the way from Summit Lake alone in his little Chestnut, and he had much later news of the outside world than Fox had been able to give us. He reported that the Roumanians were making great headway against Austria, that both suffrage and prohibition had been carried in British Columbia, and that the Conservative party had been ingloriously routed. A few miles back he had seen a big bull moose walking along the shore within a hundred feet of him.

It seemed bad luck, indeed, that he, who had no rifle, should have seen the moose, while we, who had three, did not. We saw no big game whatever on our way down the Finlay, though we did see many flocks of ducks, chiefly a species of black duck. I did some miserable shooting at these birds with the little rifle, and before reaching the Forks hit only two, when I ought to have killed three or four times that many. Joe was charitable enough to ascribe my poor success to the rifle, but doubtless shooting from a moving canoe at moving objects, a front sight the color of the water, and the fact that the ranges were from sixty to over a hundred yards were the main causes. However, when I finally gave the rifle a thorough scouring out, I did better, but this was after we passed the Forks. My failure to kill more ducks was the more regrettable because we were having no luck fishing and the ducks were astonishingly fat and tender and truly delicious.

Some miles below where we met Ross we saw the camp of Booth and his squaw and paused for a few



minutes' chat. The *klooch* looked husky and not uncomely. She remained on the bank above and paid no heed to Joe's salutations.

The next morning we passed at the mouth of the Ospica the camp of Charlie Hunter and his big family, and below the Omineca we met Angus Sherwood and his partner McKennon on their way to their trapping-ground up the Omineca. Sherwood, who is a State of Maine man and probably the most competent person in the whole Finlay region, was once a partner of my old friend, Adolf Anderson, down in the Thompson River country and also of another friend, Jim Beattie, whom I was expecting to see at Hudson's Hope. We had already met Sherwood with Huston's party, and he now told us that it was the Huston party that left the food in the grub-box in the cabin above the Long Canyon. Imagine the trapper's amusement when he read our note explaining and apologizing for the trade we had made!

We lunched that day on Pete Toy's celebrated bar, stopped for a moment to say hello to Gibson, dug some splendid potatoes at Joe's shack half a mile above the Forks, and by mid-afternoon reached Peterson's. We had a grand feed that night, including some excellent graham bread. Smith and Staggy paddled over after supper, and we sat up far into the night listening to old Peterson's stories of early days on the Parsnip.

Peterson, I shall remark here, is a cross-grained old stick of oak. Naturally very kind-hearted, he has suffered many disappointments and is irascible and hot-

tempered. He has quarrelled with half the dwellers on the border-land and has had personal conflicts with several of them. He now lives in a state of feud with various trappers and prospectors. His cabin is a veritable arsenal, and a loaded rifle stands beside every doorway and in every corner. Notwithstanding, the old man has many admirable qualities, and I can say, as regards my own feelings for him, that I hope all of his dreams of a rich town site on his quarter section may soon come true!

## CHAPTER XX

### THE MIGHTY PEACE RIVER

HENCEFORTH the journey was to be through what was to me new country, for, instead of returning by way of the Parsnip, I had planned to float down the Peace. The next stage of our travels lay along that stretch of the Peace where the great river bursts its way through the mighty barrier wall of the Rockies.

A mile or so below the Forks we came to the Finlay Rapid, a stretch of about half a mile where the river runs over a rough rock bed, creating dangerous, curling waves in the centre of the stream, while near the shores ledges and detached boulders render straightaway navigation impossible. Travelers on Peace River have made much of this rapid, yet it is not a very impressive spectacle. It is, of course, an obstacle to navigation, but any tyro can easily carry round it. The passage is usually made by the south side, but in the existing low stage of water Joe elected to go by the north side. By use of a pole, the tracking-rope, a little wading and lifting and shoving, we got the canoe and load through without portaging anything except my camera and big rifle.

As we had made a late start, we lunched a few miles below the rapid on the beach at Poker Flats. On the bank above stood a cabin in which two miners had died



of scurvy in the winter of 1898-9. They were buried in the dirt floor by their surviving partner, who later managed to make his way to Edmonton, where he died in a hospital. In his last hours he is said to have told of an immensely rich bar, yielding a hundred and twenty-five dollars to the pan, and of a great hoard of buried gold. More than once travelers unacquainted with the story of the cabin have slept in it, but no one who knows the meaning of the depression in the floor has ever slept there no matter how the blizzard may roar. To Poker Flats the north shore is low and covered with forest, but we were now entering the mountains, running between great, jagged peaks. When we came to Wicked River, a swift stream that does not belie its name, we noticed a cabin belonging to a certain "Slim" Cowart, a friend of Joe's. "Slim" had left it to go out and look after some lots he owned in Prince George.

"Do you see that little beach yonder?" said Joe, pointing up the Wicked. "It was there I shot my grizzly last spring. I had been out hunting all day and had seen nothing at all. When I was almost back to camp I saw a big silvertip lumbering along right across from me. He wasn't forty yards from me, and I took good aim at his head. When I pulled trigger he sunk right down and died quietly, without a row of any sort. The skin was a prime one, and I sold it to Huston for forty-five dollars."

Just below Wicked River we came upon a flock of black ducks, and my first bullet killed one of them. All

of them were full grown and well able to fly, but they were very fat and about half of them elected to dive instead of taking wing. As a result, I was able to shoot two more before the survivors discovered that the air was a safer element than the water. As I continued to have success farther down, it was evident that either I had found my shooting eye again, or else the scouring I had given the little rifle had been helpful. Unfortunately, soon after I began to get results the cartridges gave out.

A little beyond the mouth of Wicked River Mount Selwyn towers up on the south shore. This peak rises right up from the water's edge, and its northern face is almost sheer. In reality there are three peaks, the southernmost, which is not visible from the river, being the tallest—about 7,500 feet. Selwyn is known all through the north as "the Mountain of Gold." From reading previous descriptions of it I had inferred that the whole mountain is a mighty mass of gold quartz, but this is a mistake. It is only a sort of foot-hill or buttress on the up-stream side that is composed of quartz, the rest being seemingly a sort of hard slate. Whether the quartz runs under the mountain or the slate from the mountain runs under the quartz I do not know, but from the river the line of contact looks as if the latter were the case. The quartz is said to reappear farther back. At any rate, millions of tons of it are visible from the river, and assays are said to run from three dollars a ton up to about eighteen. Thus far the cost of transporting supplies has been too great





Reproduced from a photograph by M. B. Huston.

SLIM COWART'S CABIN NEAR MT. SELWYN.



Reproduced from a photograph by M. B. Huston.

ROCK ARCH ON WICKED RIVER.





for any serious work to be done, but the ore is all staked out and enough blasting done to comply with the mining laws. When we passed no one was living there, there being only one permanently occupied cabin between the Forks and the Great Canyon. The advent of a railroad may change all this, and steamers will probably be put on the river. There is said to be plenty of coal along the Carbon River, not far above the Canyon, and a few years may witness some busy scenes about Selwyn. The great Treadwell mine on the west coast, said to be one of the best paying propositions in America, is composed of low-grade ore, no richer, I have been told, than that of Selwyn is supposed to be.

Mica, with large, clear sheets and fine cleavage, is also said to exist in the neighborhood of Selwyn, but we did not see it. Nearer the Canyon there are large deposits of coal, and along one stretch of the river, for several hundred yards, we got strong whiffs of sulphur or natural gas, I could not be sure which.

For thirty miles or so beyond Mount Selwyn the river flows right through the main chain of the Rockies, and the scenery on either hand is grand and gloomy beyond description. The peaks are extremely steep and ragged, and many of them rise a mile right up from the river. In the face of a great cliff, thousands of feet up, we noticed the black mouth of a mighty cave. I am convinced that in time the ride through this gorge will be widely known as one of the great scenic wonders of America. Just let some enterprising company get a

railroad built through it, and then you will hear of it! Even after so many weeks of wandering among mountains I was strongly impressed by the spectacle. With the exception of the Liard, the Peace is the only river that breaks its way through the Rocky Mountains, either in Canada or the United States. Unfortunately, we passed through amid a storm of rain and snow from low-lying, wind-driven clouds that rendered picture-taking impracticable until we reached the eastern limits of the high mountains next day.

About mid-afternoon, the storm of rain beating in our faces—it was snowing, of course, on the mountain tops—became so insupportable that we camped at the mouth of Barnard Creek, a stream that enters from the north. While Joe was cooking supper I took my rod and rifle and made my way down to the mouth of the creek—or rather mouths, for there were several outlets through the gravel-bar—in the hope of catching some arctics. I had no luck whatever, but on my way back to camp I happened to glance up at a high cut bank opposite and saw a black bear eating red willow berries in a little plot of thicket that had slid forty or fifty feet down from the top.

I at once began to consider ways and means of getting a good shot, but the prospect was not encouraging. The river at that point was fully three hundred yards wide, while the bluff where the bear was feeding ran up five or six hundred feet and, of course, sloped back somewhat. On the leeward side the bluff extended along the river for nearly a mile, and to make such a *détour*



would have required an hour or more, which was not to be thought of, for dusk was already falling. As a bear's eyesight is rather bad, it would probably have been better to have boldly crossed in the canoe to the foot of the bluff, but there was a chance that the bear might come down to the river to drink, so I merely sat and waited. Meanwhile it was growing dark fast, and by and by the bear moved upward, so that it appeared that he had no idea of descending to the water. It was clear that I would either have to take a long shot or else let bruin entirely alone. It was already so dark that I could not see the sights at all well, but I raised the rear one to four hundred yards, and, with a prayerful hope rather than any real expectation, took as good aim as the light would permit and pulled the trigger. For two or three minutes the bear hid in the bushes, then began to climb the bank. I fired twice more at him on the move. When he neared the top he slipped and fell back, and for a moment I thought he was disabled, but he recovered himself, took a less precipitous course, reached the top, and disappeared in the thick spruce woods on top. Whether or not I hit him I shall never know. I sincerely hope not.

The episode well illustrates one of the provoking features of big-game hunting: namely, one sees much game at times when the failing light renders it impossible for the hunter to make a careful stalk.

There are said to be a good many bears, both black bears and grizzlies, along this section of the river. The spring before Joe and Slim Cowart made a trip up one

of the small streams that flow in from the north and saw the track of a perfectly enormous grizzly.

"It was so big that it made me feel shivery all over and look around me," declared Joe.

He thinks it may have been this bear that "killed and ate two Siwash" in this region at some time—indeterminate—in the past. He admitted, however, that the Siwash may have been mythical, the products of some trapper's fertile imagination.

Toward noon next day we neared a cut bank on the north shore, and Joe, after standing up for a better look, announced:

"Yonder is Parle Pas Rapids."

There was no sign of rapids until we were close up, for the water drops enough to hide the white breakers below, while a boatman going down-stream hears very little noise, particularly if the wind happens to be down-stream. It is this latter characteristic that has given the place its name, "*Rapide qui ne parle pas*," that is, "Rapid that does not speak." A couple of years before this lack of warning had tragic consequences for two greenhorns who were descending the river. They failed to keep a good watch ahead, and before they knew it were in the grip of the rapids. Their canoe was upset and one of them was drowned. The other managed to reach Hudson's Hope in a dazed condition.

The Parle Pas Rapids are about a thousand feet long and are caused by a nearly horizontal bed of stone outcropping in the river bed, over which the water flows in most places in a thin sheet. Properly managed, the

descent presents no great difficulties; by using the rope and by doing a little wading and shoving in shallow places we got the canoe past along the north shore, without taking anything except a few of our most valuable articles out of it.

These rapids mark the eastern limit of the main range of the Rockies, as do the Finlay Rapids their western limit. Considering the immense magnitude of the break, it is astonishing that the river's course should be so smooth and level. The current, to be sure, is lively, averaging perhaps four miles an hour, but these two rapids are the only noteworthy instances of rough water, and even they are hardly awe-inspiring. The fact that Peace River has worn down its bed until it is so comparatively level would seem to indicate that the drainage system and the mountains through which it breaks are very, very old.

We lunched that day at the mouth of the Ottertail, a fine, large mountain stream that flows into the Peace by three outlets. The sun had now come out and the weather was warmer, and I managed to catch three fine arctics and two sapi at this place, one of the latter being a four-pound fish. At the mouth of a creek farther down I also landed another sapi. For some time we had been having no luck angling, and these fish furnished a welcome change from our usual diet. Our ill luck had no doubt been partly due to cold, cloudy weather, but in part probably to the fact that most of the arctics had gone up the small streams to spawn. In females of both the arctics and the sapi we found eggs.



High, rounded hills had now replaced the ragged mountains, and from a little below the Ottertail the hills on the north shore were for the most part practically bare of trees and covered with grass. Those on the south shore continued to be more or less timbered with spruce, pine, and poplar, though few of the trees are big enough for lumber, being low and limby. Generally speaking, this condition of timber on the south shore and grass on the north shore continues for hundreds of miles, at least as far as to Peace River Crossing. I have met no one who could give a thoroughly satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. Mr. Brenot, a Dominion land-surveyor whom I met below Hudson's Hope, suggests that possibly it is because of the fact that for generations voyageurs have camped on the northern bank, this being the sunny side, with the result that more forest fires have occurred on this bank, thus denuding the country of timber and permitting grass to grow.

In many places the hills rise from the river in a succession of terraces, some of which look very much like long railway cuts or embankments along the hillsides. The terraces probably mark old river-levels.

In the spring and early fall the bare hillsides are a great resort for bears. On one hill that Joe pointed out to me a party of white men going down the preceding spring had seen seven or eight grizzlies scattered about, feeding on grass and roots. Two of the men landed and tried to get a shot, but a party of Beaver Indians, whose presence they did not suspect, were nearer and managed

to kill five bears before the white men could come up. This story seems a bit incredible, but Joe claimed to have been present, and it was vouched for by several other persons at Hudson's Hope.

We slept that night in a comfortable cabin at Brennan's Flat, the cabin being the property of a man who located there some years before and gave his name to the spot. Brennan was absent, as were his two partners, Wood and Taylor, but we made ourselves at home and had a big feast that night on two of our ducks, and on some of our trout next morning. The flat is noteworthy for two things: there are mule-deer in the country behind it, while some of the gravel-bars along it contain gold. We saw two miniature Ferris wheels rigged up on rafts alongside two of these bars, the idea being that the current should turn the wheels and lift water to wash the gravel thrown into the sluices on the bar. Only a little work had been done, and we later learned that owing to the low stage of the river the current was not strong enough to turn the wheels.

Despite bitter cold and a dense fog we were off next morning before sunrise, being anxious to make the Canyon and cross the portage that day. Some miles below Brennan's we found a survey outfit shivering around their fires waiting for breakfast, and we stopped a few minutes that Joe might secure from the head surveyor a signature to a paper connected in some way with Joe's pre-emption at the Forks. The party had been working around the Forks when we started up Finlay River, and I had already met several of the men.

Farther down the river we passed another party of men in camp upon the bank. One of them recognized my helper and shouted:

“Hello, Joe!”

“Who are you?” asked Joe in return.

Some name was shouted back, but Joe is a little deaf, while I, being unfamiliar with the name, could not quite catch it. Two or three times we repeated the question with the same result. Finally I managed to get the words:

“Used to be bartender at Fort George!”

When I imparted this information to my steersman, he at once understood that it was a certain crippled little French Canadian who had recently ceased dispensing liquids over the bar and had come up to this region with his wife to trap.

At half-past nine, having already made twenty miles that morning, we came in sight at last of the famous Peace River Canyon. The stream is swifter than usual far above the entrance to the gorge, and though one hears much talk of the danger of being carried down, only a drunken man or a half-witted fool would ever disregard the abundant warnings the stream gives of danger. There were two or three canoes and boats, one of them old and rotten, on the beach or on the bank above, and Jim Beattie, who has charge of the portage, has a good cabin and a stable here. No one occupies the place permanently, however, and the traveler who reaches this end of the portage must walk overland fourteen miles to Hudson's Hope in order to procure a





THE ENTRANCE TO PEACE RIVER CANYON.



BEAVER TEPEE AT HUDSON'S HOPE.



wagon. Across the river from the head of the portage there is a coal exposure, into which some one has dug a short shaft.

I was exceedingly anxious to reach the Hope that day, for I expected mail there from the outside, so I planned to leave Joe in charge of the outfit and walk over by myself. First, however, I took my camera and set off down-stream for a look at the head of the canyon. From the portage the distance is about a mile along a boulder beach. In old days the portage began only a little distance above the canyon, and at different times the Hudson's Bay Company, "Twelve-foot" Davis, and perhaps other fur-traders had small posts here for the Indian trade.

The river contracts greatly before entering between the rock walls, and for over twenty miles it is a foaming torrent of turbulent water, the total descent in that distance being about 243 feet. So far as known there is no very high fall, the river flowing in a series of rapids and chutes between perpendicular and often overhanging walls of sandstone. No one has ever explored the whole of the canyon, and the task would be very difficult, though it might possibly be done when the stream is frozen, a feat that Jim Beattie tells me he contemplates doing some day. Tradition says that two parties—one composed of two Chinamen, the other headed by a missionary—ignorantly attempted to run the canyon in years gone by. Of course, nothing more was ever heard of them. A British Columbia surveyor a few years ago tried the experiment of sending through a



very heavy, strong boat, well braced. Only a small, battered piece was observed to float out at the lower end!

The time will probably come when this canyon will be harnessed to great turbines. The power that could thus be created would exceed that of several Niagaras. A quarter of a century from now the whole of the canyon may be lined with great manufacturing establishments. Stranger things have happened. Would that I had all that power within twenty miles of Chicago or New York!

I saw the canyon at a most unfavorable time to be impressed by it. As I have said before, the summer had been an exceedingly dry one on the headwaters of Peace River, and the stream was unusually low. In times of high water the river rises completely over the rocks shown on the right of the illustration. I noticed, by the way, two or three deep "pot holes" on these rocks.

I returned to the canoe about eleven o'clock, ate a light lunch, stuck a couple of pieces of chocolate and a duck sandwich in my pocket, picked up my rifle, and set out on my fourteen-mile hike for Hudson's Hope. We had heard a rumor up the river that Beattie was expected to visit the survey camp, and when I reached the top of the bench above the river I saw fresh wagon tracks that had come nearly to the end of the portage and then had turned up-stream along a newly opened trail. I jumped to the conclusion that the tracks must have been made by Beattie, but I knew that I could

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not catch up with him and that he would learn from the surveyors of our having come down and would return; as I was extremely eager to get my mail and learn how things were at home, I decided to keep on to the Hope.

The way first led upward for many hundred feet, but the trail was open and dry and just hard enough for good walking, while I was wearing a pair of light shoes, had no pack, the poplar and jack-pine woods along the way were delightfully open, the weather was fine, and I found the walk a real pleasure. As I hurried along, I had a consciousness that I was following a historic highway. For a century this has been the path followed by Indians and trappers on their way to and from the mountains. Mackenzie had trodden it, and McLeod and Finlay and Butler and Pike and other celebrities whose names are associated with the "great lone land" of the far north. To the left rose a high rocky hill that earlier travelers, familiar with buffalo, called "the Bull's Head," and the resemblance was easy to be seen. On some later maps the name is given to a mountain across the Peace, but this is due to a surveyor's mistake.

After walking for two hours I came to a little creek, the first water I had seen, and stopped a few minutes to drink and to eat my duck sandwich and chocolate. On the shore of this creek I saw a track which I first thought had been made by a bear, but closer inspection showed that it was the footprint of a big timber-wolf. Evidently the country was not yet so very much civilized, after all.



During the fourth hour I walked a long distance through stretches of tall, slender poplars that had been killed by fire a few years before. There had been a heavy wind the night before, and scores of the poplars had fallen across the trail. People travelling along the portage with horses or wagons carry axes with which to clear such windfalls out of the way.

Finally the trail ran out upon the edge of a bluff whence, far below me, I could descry the deep gorge of the Peace once more, and the dozen or so cabins that I knew must constitute the famous settlement of Hudson's Hope. Before one of the most considerable of these structures rose the inevitable flagpole that marks a Hudson's Bay post.

It did not take me long to reach the settlement and to claim my mail at the post-office, which I found was located at the Hudson's Bay store. Then from the government telegraph-operator, Mr. Ralph M. Osborne, I learned that I had read the signs rightly and that Beattie had gone up the river. Osborne directed me to hunt up a Mr. MacEwan, who has a place next to Beattie's and in his absence looks after Beattie's interests, and by him I was told that there were no other horses available to haul over our stuff. Osborne and MacEwan were confident that Beattie would hear of our arrival and would return, so I decided to remain at the Hope until this happened. MacEwan, who knew that Jim was expecting me, gave me the key to Jim's cabin, and, as I had known the owner years before, I had no hesitation about making myself at home.



Beattie's and MacEwan's cabins stand upon the edge of the bluff overlooking the Peace and command a noble prospect of water, valley, and hills. The valley, or rather gorge, of the Peace is here several hundred feet in depth. A little way down the hill from the cabins a splendid spring bubbles out and furnishes an abundant supply of the finest water. On a flat across the river and some distance farther down-stream lies the old site of Hudson's Hope, and it is worth remarking that on most maps the post is still placed on the south side of the Peace.

Both MacEwan and Osborne are Americans. The former was for years a miner in the Western States, and he enjoys the distinction of having resided longer at the Hope than any other white inhabitant, though he had been there only five years. Osborne is a native, as I recall it, of Montana. He is a young man, still in his twenties, but he started out early, was for several years a cowman, then drifted northward into Canada; lived for a time at Peace River Crossing, where he managed to make a stake in real estate, and now for a bit has been working as telegraph-operator at this distant settlement. He was good enough to invite me to eat with him until Beattie arrived, and I revelled in real milk and cream, garden-stuff, and other delicacies.

By noon next day I knew most of the prominent citizens of the Hope, had seen the three belles of the settlement—daughters of a French-Canadian pre-emptor; in fact, was beginning to feel like an old-time resident. These girls, by the way, were the first white

women that I had beheld since leaving Hansard, for though there is a white woman at McLeod, I did not happen to see her. The winter before there had been two white women at the Forks, but the loneliness had proved too much for them. The Hope was much elated over the fact that a day or two before my arrival a tiny white stranger had come to town, the mother of it being a Mrs. Bodiger, one of the women who had spent the preceding winter at the Forks.

Like practically every other place in Canada, Hudson's Hope has had its real-estate boom, but things were now properly described as "very quiet." I believe that the boom did not reach the stage of platting land into town lots, but several men came thither to file on land in anticipation of realizing big returns. Hard times in the Dominion had caused some of the settlers to become discouraged, and the population at the Hope was smaller than it had been two or three years before.

From what I heard it appeared that about half the residents had just departed by way of the Crossing and Edmonton for Kamloops—I think that was the town; at least the round trip was about two thousand miles—to testify at the trial of a fellow citizen who was accused of rape. I had heard echoes of this case ever since reaching Prince George, and as the affair had peculiar complications and the man was widely known, the population of the Peace River country seemed much divided over it. Among those who had gone out to the trial as a witness was "The Sandbar Queen," who after a lurid career along the Fraser had transferred her



activities to Peace River and the Hope, where she had become the proprietress of a shack bearing the sign "restaurant." Being a lady with a trace of "color," she occupied her spare time in doing washing for the bachelors of the burg.

Another character of the region whom I did not have the good luck to meet was a certain "Skookum" Black, though Black is not his real name.

"There are three liars in British Columbia," said one of my acquaintances at the Hope. "One of them is a certain man at Fort St. John, and the other two are Skookum Black of Moberly Lake. Skookum a few years ago met a lady who was travelling in the Mackenzie-Peace country, getting material for a book she later published, and he told her some wild yarns about the region and its citizens. One thing she wrote down on his say-so was that forty miles is considered a fair day by Peace River trappers. Now I once passed three of Skookum's night camps in half a day, so it must be that he was speaking of the travelling powers of other trappers than himself."

At noon of the day after my own arrival at the Hope I was rejoiced to see Joe and Beattie driving in with the canoe and the rest of the outfit. It was a great pleasure to shake Beattie by the hand, for six years before I had ridden for a couple of days with him on the Embarras trail southwest of Edson, and I had corresponded with him since. He is an Englishman by birth, but he came out to Saskatchewan as a boy, and when I met him before he was working as a professional



hunter for the Pacific Pass Coal Company. He had had some remarkable experiences the previous spring catching wild horses in the Yellowhead Pass region, and was then riding a black outlaw stallion that he had roped. Later he trapped in the Thompson River country with another friend of mine, Adolf Anderson, then caught the gold fever and went to the Omineca country with Angus Sherwood, the Teare brothers, and several more, lost much money and found no dust, so settled down at the Hope to tend portage.

After shaking hands with Jim I made another valued acquaintance in the person of his little black terrier, Nig. Nig is one of those splendid doggy little dogs who make friends with every one and likes to spring up into your lap for a quiet nap. Although he weighs only eleven pounds, the bears have to look out when he is around; last spring he cornered a big black fellow and kept him busy until Beattie got in a death shot. Strange as it may seem, two of these little dogs make an ideal combination for hunting bears. While bruin is chasing one, the other springs in, gives a nip, dodges away, and keeps the bear's attention until the other dog can repeat the performance.

One heard remarkable stories of the number of bears that are killed by the Indians. Listening to such stories, one is likely to form an altogether erroneous notion about the number of bears, and particularly of grizzlies. In reality, seeing and killing a grizzly in any country is largely a matter of chance. A man may go out for a short hunt or he may simply be travelling with no in-

tention of hunting, and be lucky—or unlucky—enough to see several of these animals. On the other hand, he may live in the country for years and have no luck. Jim Beattie has been hunting and trapping in the Canadian Rockies for ten or a dozen years, and has killed many bears, but not a single silvertip. A squawman named Gregory—from Pendleton, Indiana, originally—has been trapping along the Peace for five years and has never even seen one. Neither has Brady, a trapper and trader who has a place away up on the wilds of Halfway River.

Each year, however, a few grizzly hides are brought into Hudson's Hope. Osborne has a fine, large skin, with splendid claws, which he bought of an Indian for five dollars! Last spring Beattie bought a perfectly enormous skin from another Indian, and I saw it in the Hudson's Bay store. Unfortunately the claws were not kept on, and this greatly detracts from the value and interest. It is very difficult to get the Indians to leave the claws on a skin, and it is said that the reason is their fondness for bear paws and bear-paw soup!

These Indians are of the Beaver tribe, and nearly every account, from that of the earliest explorers down to the present day, makes them out a low-down, degraded set. They are blear-eyed, polygamous, incestuous, rotten with tuberculosis, scrofula, and syphilis, and are fast dying out. I saw only one man of the whole lot who looked healthy, and he was a mere boy who had been working with a pack-train for Hudson's Bay. This fellow came to Beattie's cabin one evening.



Now few of these Indians, despite their long association with white traders, can speak English at all well, and they have a most confusing habit, when questioned, of saying, "Yes, no. Yes, no." I asked this young Indian a number of questions, and almost invariably he responded, "Yes, no." Finally I said to him:

"You kill game last winter?"

This he understood, for he replied: "One leetle moose."

The Beavers, like the Sikannis up the Finlay, are meat-eaters, but though they often go hungry, they have no idea of "conservation." They will kill game as long as they have a chance. Some time ago a bunch of them located a lot of caribou somewhere in the Moberly Lake country. They killed and killed until their cartridges gave out; then, though they had no use for half the animals already slain, they sent to the Hope after more ammunition!

In the old days the Hudson's Bay Company employed the squaws to pack goods across the portage. It is said—probably with some exaggeration—that a squaw would pick up a hundred-pound pack and march the whole fourteen miles without once setting it down. They are still used as beasts of burden by their male lords and masters. I saw one band come into the Hope from a trip in the bush. Dashing ahead on ponies came several bucks of various ages carrying nothing except their rifles; behind plodded a long line of squaws bent under heavy burdens.

Once in a while there is a squaw who has spunk



enough to reverse the matter of lordship. I heard of one, a big, fat, "militant" two-hundred-pounder, whose husband was a weazened little buck about half her size. For years she had bossed the teepee, and his life was not a pleasant one, for when he became restive under her dominion, she proceeded to "beat up on him" in most approved fashion. A winter or so before, while the pair were plodding along a snowy trail on snowshoes, he rose in revolt, was lucky enough to knock her into a drift by a lucky blow with a club, and then proceeded to belabor her on the head until he thought he had finished her. When he reached the camp of some other Indians a few miles farther on, he swelled up with pride and announced:

"Me kill squaw."

The statement aroused more curiosity than indignation. Later some of the Indians happened to pass that way and discovered that the squaw, not quite so dead as her mate supposed, was sitting up in the snow, and ultimately she managed to drag herself into camp. But the days of her proud pre-eminence were past forever. Since then she has carried the pack like the rest of her sisters.

The Beavers are very averse to having their pictures taken, having got the notion that it is liable to bring death or bad luck. Osborne and I strolled out one afternoon through a jack-pine grove where a number of families were encamped, but whenever I trained the camera in the direction of a group they dived into their tepees like prairie-dogs into their holes.

On a high hill above the Hope the Indians have a pole that bears a gayly painted carving of a bird that would seem to be a sort of hybrid between a grouse and a rooster.

"What is that?" I asked Osborne as we were returning from the village.

"The Indians claim that whenever a stranger approaches the village this bird utters a cry that gives them warning," he replied.

Like the music of the spheres, the bird's cry evidently can be heard only by certain gifted ears, to wit, those of the Siwash.

A few trappers in the country have married Beaver squaws. One such trapper that I met had formerly been an American soldier in the Philippines. His first venture into Indian matrimony had not turned out well, for his squaw had eloped with an Indian. The white man had then taken another chance in the matrimonial lottery, and rumor ran that the same Indian was now making overtures—some said with success—to squaw number two. This gay red Lothario was hardly beautiful; he had scrofula so badly that the white men said that his head would fall off if he were to remove the rag he kept tied round his neck; but he seemed to have a winning way with the ladies. He defended his efforts to steal wife number two by declaring that she really belonged to him, as he had bought a calico dress for her before she was married.

At Hudson's Hope and other places along my route I found the bachelors talking and joking a great deal

about "war widows." One jolly old trapper ventured the opinion that even as ugly a man as he ought to be able to get a wife now. I presume that a good many English women who have lost their mates or prospective mates will go to Canada in the next few years; perhaps even some of them will be sent there, as single women were sent out to Jamestown in Colonial times. What adjustments in methods of living a London lass transferred to the banks of Peace River would have to make!

I do not wonder at the fact that now and then a trapper or prospector tires of domestic duties and longs for a mate to attend to them. When a trapper is a good cook, as many of them are, it is not so bad, but those who are not lead a miserable existence. One hears amusing stories of the culinary expedients of some of the denizens of the region. A certain Scotsman has porridge three times a day, while an old Yankee, of cast-iron stomach, cooks hot cakes for every meal.

I had expected as soon as Joe and the canoe arrived over the portage to set out for the Crossing, but Beattie was anxious to become the owner of the canoe, while I wished, if possible, to reach the Crossing the following Tuesday, the date one of the semiweekly trains would leave for Edmonton. A big gasoline-boat was on its way up the river, and it was represented to me that this boat would be sure to get me to the Crossing in time for the train. As we had now reached the telegraph-line and civilization, I regarded my trip as practically over, and saw no reason for making the monotonous trip down the Peace by canoe. Therefore I sold Jim the



canoe and settled down at his cabin to wait for the boat.

It was with real regret that I parted from the little craft. She had served us well, and was a credit to her builders. Only once had she sprung a leak and that a tiny one, due to rough usage in hauling her over some jagged rocks above Deserter's Canyon; a little pitch had remedied it. Some of the paint was scraped off her bottom, but her timbers were sound and stanch, and a coat of varnish would make her as good as new.

As the boat did not arrive for two days, I had time to visit with Beattie and to learn more about the Hope. One afternoon Osborne and I rode out on horseback to what is known as "The Flat," where a number of homesteaders have located, though few are now living there. The land of this section of British Columbia—a great mass of 3,500,000 acres known as "the Peace River Block"—is still controlled by the Dominion government, and the word "homestead" is used here instead of "pre-emption," as in the rest of the Province.

In this and practically every other section of Peace River, as well as much farther south, potatoes had been badly injured, and oats and wheat totally ruined, except for the straw, by a heavy August frost. I saw heads of wheat that from a distance looked well, yet that contained not the sign of a kernel. I have little doubt that settlers on the high prairie will always be more or less troubled by frost. The best land along Peace River is that which is down in the deep valley of the river. This valley is often seven or eight hundred feet below

the level of the plateau above, and the warmth of the water saves crops on the river flats from frosts that ruin crops on the land above.

On the ride back, from the high ground above the Hope, we got a superb view of some of the eastern Rockies. From summit to base they were now covered with a mantle of snow, and they loomed up almost ghost-like in the clear evening air.

As I gazed a feeling of longing to wander once more among those delectable peaks filled my heart, and I wondered, with a strange clutching at my throat, if I would ever see them again.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE END OF IT

THE gasolene-boat reached Hudson's Hope at ten o'clock on Sunday morning, but it did not set out on the return trip until Monday. To avoid the necessity of early rising, most of the half-dozen passengers, Lavoie and I included, went aboard on Sunday evening. The boat, though big enough to have a pilot-house, was not equipped to carry passengers; in fact, she transported most of her freight in a big scow that was pushed ahead of her. I was lucky enough to get a mattress, and with my own blankets made myself a comfortable bed down in the shaft-house, while Joe took a job as cook and, of course, had the cook's bunk.

The boat was run by four men: The captain, who was an old Mississippi River man and who showed much interest when I told him that I had once taken "the old route to Dixie"; a mate, who had worked for a time on the Yukon; a half-breed pilot, and the engineer. All were new at the job of operating a gasolene-boat. Once a big blaze leaped up in the engine-room, whereupon the captain was about to attempt to put it out with a bucket of water when Joe, who knew better, fortunately stopped him.

The river looked much the same as above the Canyon, being from a quarter to half a mile wide, with a



current of perhaps five miles an hour. There were a good many low islands, evidently formed by sand, gravel, and silt collecting behind log-jams. It is said that many of the bars show color of gold, but too fine to be remunerative to hand-labor, though it is thought that steam-dredging may some day prove profitable.

As we were running past a gravel-bar on the north shore, some of us happened to notice a large animal, brindled above, with blackish belly and legs, standing at the water's edge.

"Look at that Indian dog!" said some one up in the pilot-house.

The creature did indeed resemble a dog; in reality it was not a dog at all, but a black wolf (*Canis griseus*) and a big one. I had noticed many tracks of this animal in the course of the trip, but this was the first time I had actually seen the beast itself. It seemed strange that when I did so it should be from the deck of a noisy river-boat! Although the wolf was hardly more than a hundred yards away, he watched us quite casually, and only after we were past did he turn and trot back into the bush. If I had had my rifle ready I could have made the occasion pretty interesting for the beast, but I was expecting nothing of the sort, and the weapon was quietly reposing in its case.

Our sight of this animal tended to confirm word brought into the Hope by the Indians that the wolves were moving down from the Nelson River country, the explanation being that the "rabbits"—that is the northern varying hares (*Lepus americanus macfarlani*)—

were nearly all dead. Of the latter fact there was no doubt. Prairie-chickens, only a year or two before extremely plentiful, were also said to be very scarce. The rabbits had become infected with a strange disease which about every seven years sweeps them off in multitudes. Just what this disease is naturalists are not agreed. Roderick MacFarlane, long a chief factor of the Great Company and a close student of natural history, asserts that it is an affection of the head and throat. Whatever it is, it would seem to be a provision of nature designed to prevent the rabbits from simply overrunning the country, for they multiply so rapidly that, if not checked in some way, they would soon not have standing-room. Scarcity of rabbits is a serious matter to the people who inhabit these northern regions. The Indians largely depend on rabbits snared by the squaws and children to get them through periods of scarcity of "big meat," and not infrequently white trappers also are reduced to catching and eating the humble bunnies. Furthermore, several animals, including the lynx, marten, coyote, and wolf, live mostly or in part on rabbits. When the rabbit crop is short the lynx and marten crops are short, also; many lynx, in fact, starve to death in such times.

The big wolves also hunt much larger game. They hang around caribou herds and take toll of calves, young animals, the sick and crippled, and now and then of the sound and strong. Deer, mountain-sheep, mountain-goats, and even moose fall prey to them. MacFarlane relates that once while travelling on the ice between Forts Liard and Nelson his party came upon a patch of





LOOKING BACK AT THE ROCKIES FROM BEYOND CLEARWATER.





hard-packed bloody snow where a pack of wolves had set upon and pulled down a big bull moose and had eaten everything except the larger bones. The bull had evidently fought hard for his life, for near by they found and killed a wolf that had one of its hind legs shattered.

The people of the Peace River country lose many horses and cows in winter through the depredations of wolves. Around St. John a few winters before about two hundred horses were so destroyed. If the Indian reports of wolves coming down from the north were true, then the winter of 1916-17 doubtless proved a bad one for stock owners.

If wolves multiplied without checks of any kind, they would soon overrun the country, for they are so crafty that it is difficult to kill them except by poisoning. Luckily, they are subject to several fatal diseases: mange kills many, and the beasts are also attacked by a strange distemper that now and then sweeps away some of the Eskimo and Indian dogs. Occasionally a wolf goes mad and becomes a peril not only to the rest of the pack but to man as well. Except when mad or ravenous with hunger, wolves are careful to avoid men.

Some distance below Fort St. John, a trading-post that seemingly contained a smaller white population than the Hope, we took aboard a party of sixteen Dominion surveyors who were going out for the winter. As the boat was too small to accommodate them, they took up their quarters on the scow and cooked their meals on a stove they brought along. They had come

in early in the spring before the ice broke up and seemed very happy to be on their way to the Grand Pays. They had been gathered from all over Canada and even from overseas. The head surveyor was a French Canadian from Ottawa. One of his assistants, Norlander by name, was a young Swedish engineer who had been one of the tennis referees at the Olympic games in Stockholm.

Another member of the party was Sandy Turner, one of the men who accompanied Hanbury on his trip to the Barren Grounds, the Arctic coast, and the Coppermine. Hanbury's book is one of the classics of northern travel, and in it he presents in a simple yet most fascinating way the story of what was truly an extraordinary journey, during most of which he and his companions lived almost wholly on caribou, seals, and musk-oxen, being without even tea a large part of the time. Stefansson says of the book that it gave him more suggestions about methods of travel than all others put together; in fact, it was Hanbury who first demonstrated the possibility of living and travelling with the Eskimo without taking along a commissariat, a plan that Stefansson has followed with such remarkable success. Turner told me that when Harry Radford was preparing to go north he asked Turner to accompany him, but they were unable to come to terms; had Turner gone Radford probably would not have become involved in the trouble that led to his murder, for Turner is a man of much good sense and would have known how to deal with the natives.

After seeing the wolf I put my rifle together and for



hours, despite a bitter cold wind, kept watch on the shores without seeing any other game. Shortly before nightfall we passed out of British Columbia into Alberta and, as my hunting license extended no farther, I decided that it was a good time to try to get warm. Accordingly I climbed down into the shaft-house and crept under my blankets. I had been there only a few minutes when I heard a terrific noise I could not identify, though it sounded more like tearing an enormous piece of cloth than anything else I could think of. As the boat stopped and seemed to be turning in toward the bank, I decided that perhaps we had struck a snag, so I hustled out on deck, and was astonished to learn that the crew had been shooting at some moose and had killed one! Sure enough, when we made the bank, there on the beach lay a big bull.

From the stories of those who had seen the performance and from my own observations along the beach, I gathered that what had happened was about as follows: The surveyors in the scow had noticed four moose, a bull, a cow, and two calves, running along the beach well ahead of the boat, and had called back the news to the crew. The mate at once seized a .30-30 Winchester, and the engineer his .401 automatic, and the two began blazing away at the bull, which was about two hundred yards off. Both men emptied their magazines and presently the bull fell dead. The others ran on up the beach, hung round for a bit, and then took to the timber, which all could easily have done when the boat first came in sight. When the dead animal was skinned, it

was discovered that only two out of over a dozen bullets had struck him. One had gone through his tongue without touching the lips or jaws on either side. The other had hit him just back of the short ribs and had ranged forward through the lungs.

The boat was tied up for the night, a fire was built, and by its lurid light the cook of the surveying-party, with the help of others, began the bloody task of skinning the big beast and cutting up the meat. As the "running season" was at hand, some of us doubted whether the meat would be edible or not, but when we tried it next day we found it not bad, though a bit tough. As the surveying-party had been without fresh meat practically all summer, they consumed great quantities of it. Moose meat, by the way, looks and tastes a good deal like beef. Those who know say that one can endure eating it for a longer period than is the case with venison and most other game meats.

The bull was an old animal, above the average in size, yet the antlers, according to my tape, measured only  $49\frac{1}{2}$  inches spread. They were, however, considered large for Peace River moose. In the course of the trip I had seen the heads of several moose that had been shot, also many shed horns, but this was the largest set I had seen. The surveyor, who had been working in the country for years, said the same.

The horns were pretty massive, but they had not grown symmetrically, and the end of one of the smaller tines had been broken off in some way. The head and neck were big and striking, as was the bell, though it



was rather large than long. Altogether the trophy was an impressive one, and, as the engineer and mate waived their claims to it, the surveyor decided to take it back east with him. This was a rather ticklish task, as the slayers of the beast had no license, and there are certain formalities connected with shipping out a head. The Alberta law provides that travelers in these northern regions may kill game for food, but seems to say nothing regarding what may be done with the heads of such game. When the boat reached Peace River Crossing, the surveyor took the case to the local game-warden, but he was unable to throw any light on the matter, so the head was finally crated in a big box, a label reading, "Glass, handle with care," was affixed, and I have no doubt that in due course the head safely arrived in Ottawa.

The case exemplifies the confusion regarding game-laws and the disregard of them in both Alberta and British Columbia. Game of all kinds is killed whenever seen throughout the season; outsiders with "prospectors' licenses" stretch the permission therein contained to kill for food into permission to shoot indiscriminately, and no one seems inclined to want to see the laws enforced.

A couple of hours after we started next morning we saw far ahead on an immense gravel-bar a young bull moose, while some distance away a small gasoline-boat containing two men had made a landing on the beach. Seeing our boat, the moose ran back some distance from the river and then stupidly stood staring while one of



the men on shore made his way in plain sight toward him. At perhaps two hundred yards the hunter fired several shots, whereupon the bull moved off. By that time we were at a great distance, and the men in the pilot-house insisted that the moose got behind a bank and escaped; but to me, watching the scene through my glasses, it seemed that the animal sank down on the bar.

The behavior of this moose and of those seen the previous evening illustrates well an almost inexplicable paradox in moose nature. At times these animals are timid and crafty to the last degree; at others they behave like perfect lunatics.

Later in the day we saw on a high hill far back from the river a big black bear, but made no effort to disturb him. In the course of the day we also saw two coyotes and a fox. From Dunvegan onward the country is more settled, and we saw no more wild animals.

From the Canyon to Peace River Crossing, a distance of two hundred and forty miles, the river flows in a deep trough, with hills and plateaus rising on both sides, the south bank being still more or less wooded, the north bank largely prairie. After one has seen a few miles of the scenery he has, to all intents and purposes, seen all of it, for it is monotonously alike.

Much difference of opinion still exists regarding the possibilities of the country for agriculture. Some declare that it has a great future along this line, but I met others, long resident, who said that it would "never be good for anything but fur." Both judgments are probably too sweeping. There are doubtless districts like

Grande Prairie and the lower country toward Vermilion, where grain will succeed, while there are other sections that may never be good for much. The loss of practically all the grain this year was most discouraging. For years settlers had been waiting for the advent of the railroad in order to have an outlet for their wheat, and then the very first year that a railroad reached the region and there was a chance of "cashing in," Providence stepped in with a killing frost.

I was much surprised at the amount of game seen on this trip, for I had been led by government literature and by talk at the Hope to think that the section between the Hope and Dunvegan was becoming too thickly settled for game to be numerous. As a matter of fact, there are almost no people along this stretch of the river, and I have no doubt that a hunting-party could kill many moose and bear simply by cruising up and down the stream at the proper season. Up to a few years ago the river-banks in September, when the service-berries are ripe, were often literally alive with bears; as many as forty were seen on a single trip from Vermilion to the Canyon. In still earlier days great herds of buffalo and elk were observed by Mackenzie and subsequent travelers. Small herds of wild buffalo—"wood bison"—still roam the wilderness lying between the lower reaches of the Peace and the Liard. At Edmonton in 1910 I saw the skin of a bull that had been killed in that region by permission of the Canadian government. It was almost inconceivably thick and heavy.



We stopped at Dunvegan long enough for the surveying-party to stock up on tobacco. This place had its boom a few years ago, and prospectuses displayed at Edmonton and elsewhere conveyed the impression that it was already a large town with a number of railroads. It had, however, never heard the whistle of a single iron-horse, and it makes less of a showing in the way of buildings than does the Hope, though the country roundabout contains more settlers.

That this immense Peace River country, as large as some empires, will ultimately support a considerable population I have no doubt. The world is becoming so crowded that the day is drawing near when every spot that will grow potatoes, turnips, or other products that will support life will be occupied. Some land is more desirable than others, but even Iceland and Greenland are settled, and beyond all doubt the natural advantages of Peace River are immensely superior to those of either of these hyperborean islands. As wild lands are settled they tend to become less repellent and remote. The Germany of Cæsar's day was a cold country of marsh and gloomy forests, considered hardly suitable for human habitation, yet Germany is to-day more thickly inhabited than "Sunny Italy." Part of Germany is farther north than is the Peace River country, but it is not so cold. Temperatures of fifty degrees below zero Fahrenheit are not uncommon on Peace River. At present the country is a land for strong men who wish to "rough it" rather than for settlers with families.

Before we left the Hope the captain had told us that





THE PEACE BELOW DUNVEGAN.



we would hardly reach Peace River Crossing in time to make the Tuesday afternoon train for Edmonton, and, as we had to tie up once on account of dense fog and were delayed a couple of hours taking the surveyors aboard, his prognostication proved correct. It was not until well after nightfall of Tuesday that, having felt our way the last few miles, we at last tied up at the Crossing and were once more at rail-head.

A wait of three days at the Crossing for the next train and a journey of over two thousand miles still lay between me and home, but these were things to be regarded lightly. My "Great Adventure" in the Domain of the North was over. The thought gave me a feeling of sadness. What has been can never be again!

As I look back on the trip from a distance of several months, one aspect stands out above all others—our remarkable luck in escaping serious trouble. We experienced hardships, we often worked to the limit of endurance, repeatedly on land and water we slipped past situations that might easily have resulted in disaster, but slip past them we did, and at no time did we meet with serious mishap. Both of us came through at the end stronger physically than when we started.

The trials, the hardships, the discomforts, the disappointments of the long journey are already receding into the mists. Only the joys, the delights, stand out in bold relief. Again I see the swift, clear shallows, the miniature rapids, the leaping trout of Crooked River; the white-trunked poplars, the dark spires of spruce, the



fantastic cliffs of the Parsnip and the Finlay; the gorge and swirling waters of Deserter's Canyon; illimitable wastes of mountains silent in primeval sleep; the three towering summits of Mount Lloyd George and the vast sea of ice beside it; mountain-sheep quietly grazing on a plot of green beyond an Alpine valley; the ragged peaks where the majestic Peace bursts its way through the barrier wall toward the Mackenzie and the Arctic Sea. I hear again the shrill whistle of siffleurs on black cliffs, the roar of rushing rivers, the souging of the wind through wastes of forest verdure. These and a hundred other scenes and experiences are past, but they will be a part of me forever.

The geographical results were meagre enough; I had not expected it to be otherwise. But how rich those months were in experiences, in things to be remembered! When my hair is thin and white, when age has stiffened my joints beyond any except the shortest walk, when eye and trigger-finger no longer work together, when I huddle close to the fire and look back into the long past filled with many things I would fain forget, I shall recall, with some of the old glow, that once I climbed beyond the barrier ranges and looked upon a world that was new, that for a short while I lived a life such as my forefathers led, a life that is passing, that the world can never know again.

## APPENDIX

### A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN PORTAGE IN PEACE  
RIVER TO THE SOURCES OF FINLAY'S BRANCH  
AND NORTHWESTWARD, SUMMER, 1824

BY JOHN FINLAY (H. B. Co.)

(NOTES TAKEN BY J. B. TYRRELL FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE HANDS  
OF J. MCDOUGALL, ESQ., CHIEF FACTOR H. B. CO.)

On May 13 left the Rocky Mt. Portage Establishment. The party consisted of Messrs. Finlay, McDonald Munson, 6 Canoe-men, La Prise & wife, in all 10 persons.

14-18. Spent crossing the portage.

19. Started up the river. The Iroquois have been accustomed to hunt up Finlay's River.

22nd. Came to Finlay's river & made three miles up it. Took an old Slave Indian & family as guide.

May 23. Made 16-18 geo miles W.N.W. (mag.)

24. 12 N. W.

25. 16 N.W. by N. & N.W.

26. Arrived at the Forks 55 or 60 geo. miles up river in a straight course N.W. The S.W. fork rises near Bear Lake, one of the sources of the Babine River.

27. Went up rocky river from Forks 12 miles to a portage.

28. Last night two of his canoemen deserted. Crossed the portage 1100 paces & went on 4 miles.

29. Made 13 miles.

30. " 8 " Soft beds along this river are cut out into towers, bastions &c.

31. Made a few miles.

June 1. Ascended the main river to the Forks at a distance of 36 or 40 geog. miles above deserters portage. Here a small branch\* about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the river, comes down the same valley, while the large branch  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the whole comes through the range to the S.W. The Slave guide said you could go 2 days up the small branch in canoes. It then breaks up in small branches & you would go over a height of land, where there are some lakes, and then into branches of the Liard River.

The large branch, coming from S. W., takes its rise in a large lake called Thutadé. Took this branch & made 2-3 miles on it towards the S.W.

June 2. Made 6-7 miles of difficult travelling up this river.

June 3. 3 miles straight a pt. or two N. of N.W. Over portage & through canons, very difficult navigation.

4. River very bad, but made 3 miles westward & came on an Indian road & a camp of Thicannies.

5. Made a short distance up the river to the head of a portage on the right 345 paces long.

6. Ascended the gorge to an open valley, up which they went 2-3 miles & camped. This pt. he places as the most northerly pt. of this branch of the river.

7. Made  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles W.S.W.

The river now forms island shallows, with banks of loose stones & gravel.

This evening came in sight of a high peaked range of snow-covered mts.

8. Made 6-7 miles W.S.W. up river full of gravel shoals.

9-11. 8 miles S.W. through narrow chasms to a small lake  $1\frac{1}{4}$  m. long with a level plain extending to the foot of the Peak Mts. Here he found some of Thicannies fishing. Sent off two lads for the old chief Mithridates, who is fishing at a lake called Thucatadé.

12. Passed some portages in Rapid River & camped on a portage 1450 paces long.

13. Crossed the portage by 11 A.M. It is now 32 days since leaving R. Mt. Establ. Following Summary R.M. portage 6 days, to mouth of Finlay's R. 3 or 4 days, to deserters portage 5 days, to branch passed on 1st inst. 4 days, to Pt. du Mouton

\* Evidently Fox River.



4 days, to the end of this portage to Fishing Lake 3 days, or about 26 days travel. In high water river probably not practicable at all.

Paddled up the Calm river to the Fishing lakes where they came to some camps of Thicannies. The river is said to take its rise in lake Thutadé, 4 days travel by land away, but with the exception of one high fall the river is probably not bad.

14. Mithridates arrived with the Indians, in all 7 married men & 7 young men. He told him that it was three days journey across the Peak Mts. from the source of this river to Bears Lake, the river from which flows into Babine Lake. Mr. Finlay then goes on to say that he found the country west of the Mts. very rocky & mountainous with dwarf wood, and with some small plains in the valleys of the rivers.

Asked for men to guide him to the source of the river & across mts, but the chief said that there was now too much snow in the mts.

15. Remained in Camp.

16. Indians said they did not want to take him across the mts. but he resolved to go.

17. Indians promised to take him through the mts. a little later in the summer when there was less snow, & two would go to Thutadé. Left camp & made  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles to River Thutadé, which is about 30 geog. miles long straight. Made 2 miles up the river.

18. Ascending the river.

- 19-22. Ascending the river. Falls & swift water.

23. Arrived at Lake Thutadé at the source of the river. The lake runs S. by E. or S. 8 or 10 geog. miles straight & 8 or 10 miles more S.W. by S. & S.S.W. by compass. The lake is formed of a number of circular lakes & open narrows. Depth in lakes 30 fathoms. Lake 1- $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. Remained at this lake till June 30 at least, when the Journal ends.

















